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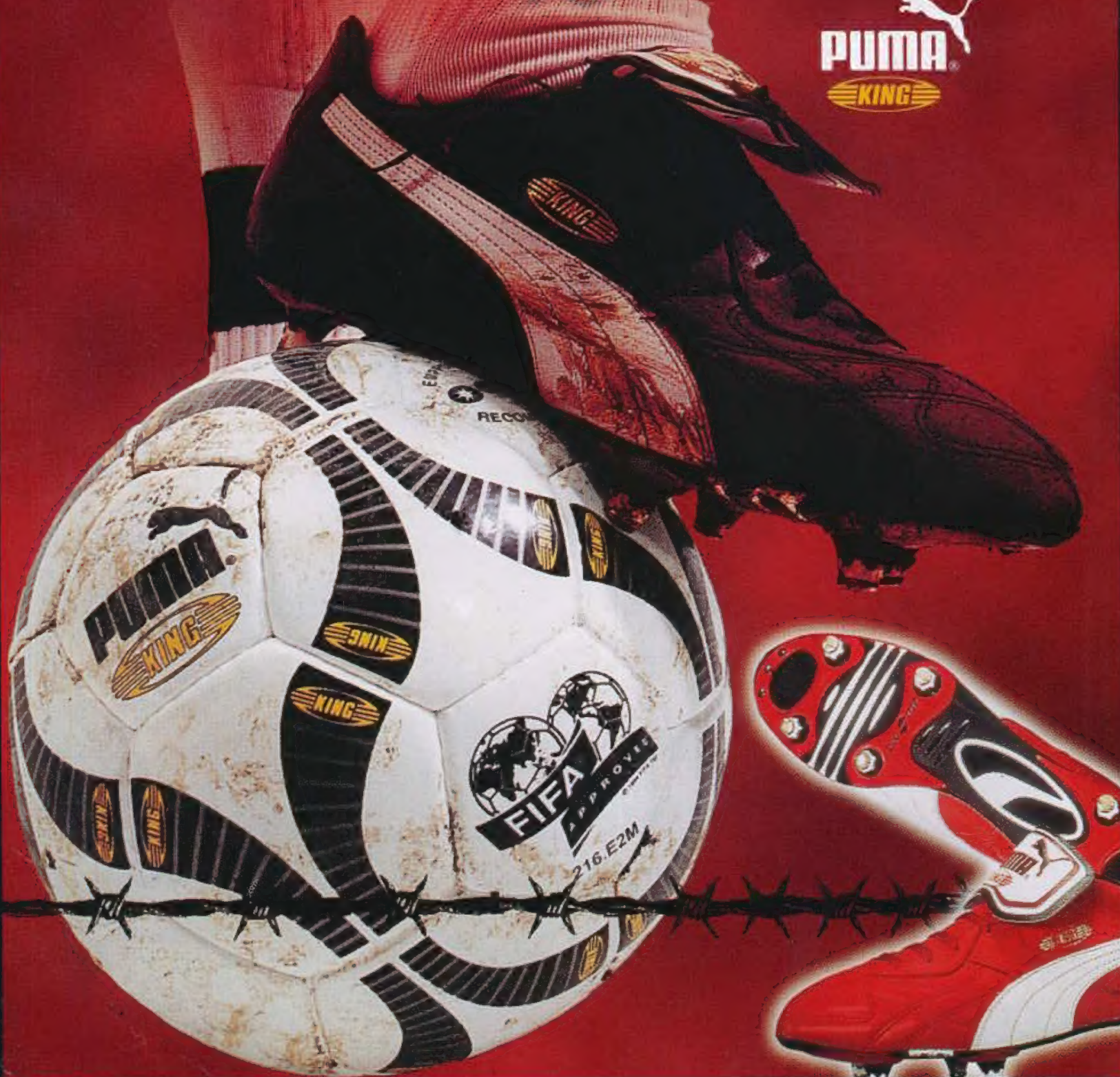
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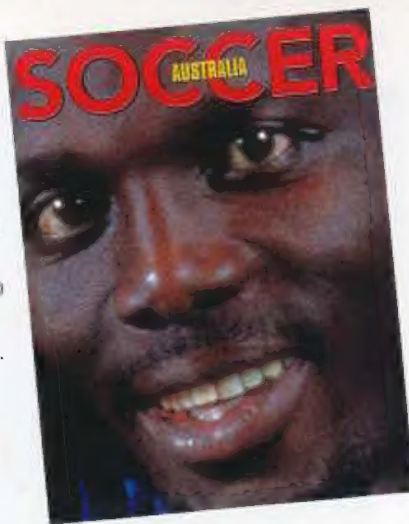
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Front Cover :
George Weah
A.C. Milan
Superstar



Issue 29 October 1997

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If world club football has a capital, it is surely the northern Italian city of Milan, home to the legendary AC Milan and Internazionale. ANGELO STICCA examines the two clubs' glorious past and glittering future.



A tale of two



one city

Season 1996-97 was an unforgettable one for the city of Milan and its millions of inhabitants. Fact.

Almost without fail in the past decade one set of fans - be they Interisti or Milanisti - has proudly paraded and partied in Piazza Duomo in the heart of Milan as their respective side has won a European Cup, Serie A Scudetto or cup final.

Unfortunately, the end of the most recent season presented only one small positive for these two proud and fiercely successful sides. And barely a glass of vino would have been raised to toast Inter's qualification for next season's UEFA Cup.

It was a season to forget - and without a doubt, it already has been.



AC Milan and its millions of fans would have more reason to feel sick following a season where the team finished in the bottom half of the table, failed to make it past the first round of the Champions

League, sacked its

coach before Christmas and didn't qualify for any European action next season.

Oscar Washington Tabarez came and went, replaced by Arrigo Sacchi who came - and was gone at the end of the season. Edgar Davids and Michael Reiziger came from Ajax and failed to make an impression, while Roberto Baggio's biggest problem was trying to get on to the field for some action.

Youngsters Pietro Vierchowod (39) and Mauro Tassotti (35) were still playing, while Paolo Maldini suffered various injuries and uncharacteristic suspensions. George Weah failed to fire, Dejan Savicevic was uninspiring, Zvonimir Boban his usual enigmatic self. Only Demetrio Albertini - Milan's only untouchable - could hold his head

high.

Casting a glance at San Siro co-tenant Internazionale, things weren't much better. Sure, Inter finished third in the league, but Inter fans and many others will tell you that with the side Inter possessed, it should have finished at least second which would have guaranteed a place in the Champions League next season.

This aside, Inter also suffered the indignity of losing a seemingly unlosable UEFA Cup final to German minnows Schalke, with the two-leg tie settled by a penalty shootout in Milan.

Add to this a shock semi-final loss in the Coppa Italia and it is clear that Inter had little reason to crow about its efforts. Coach Roy Hodgson ensured that both Milan sides would be with new coaches next season when he announced late in the season that

With the mess of last season being swept away, all eyes now focus on what lies ahead for the two Milan sides.

he would be taking over at Blackburn Rovers for season 1997-98. Not long after Hodgson's announcement former Napoli boss Gigi Simoni was given the Inter job for next season.

With the mess of last season being swept away, all eyes now focus on what lies ahead for the two Milan sides.

First, both have new



Fabio Capello



Gigi Simoni

coaches. As well as Simoni joining Inter, Fabio Capello has returned to AC following one season at Real Madrid.

Secondly, both sides have begun a clearout of players which has seen AC Milan already farewell Reiziger and Christophe Dugarry to Barcelona and Marco Simone to Paris St-Germain with a host of others set to leave including Roberto Baggio - perhaps also to Barcelona. Let's not forget Franco Baresi's retirement, a huge loss to the defence.

Paul Ince has left Inter to return to England where he has signed with Liverpool, while Aron Winter is likely to go to Turkey's Galatasaray.

But perhaps the over-riding factor in the fortunes of both clubs this coming season is two young strikers who have the world at their feet - Dutchman Patrick Kluivert and Brazilian Ronaldo.

Kluivert and teammate Winston Bogarde arrive at Milan one season after the arrival of former Ajax teammates Davids and Reiziger. Of the four Kluivert is the one all Milan fans have been waiting for. This potent goalscorer who gave Milan fans misery with his winning goal for Ajax against AC Milan in the 1995 European Cup final is now the darling of the club, the new Van Basten who will bring glory back to the super-club.

Riddled with injuries and off-field dramas - he was convicted last year of dangerous driving following a fatal accident - Kluivert is determined to show the world that he can realise the potential he displayed in recent seasons when he was the most potent goalscorer in Europe.

In a recent interview, Kluivert expressed how much he was looking forward to linking up with Weah up front where, if both find form, Milan may have one of the most potent forward lines imaginable.

Ronaldo is another story in itself. The young Brazilian star presents no doubts as to his quality and potential. He has been labelled the next Pelé, the new star of a

Brazilian side which is hot favourite to win World Cup title number five next year in France.

He has already displayed his goalscoring feats in Holland with Feyenoord, in the Netherlands with PSV Eindhoven and last season with Barcelona and now, with a protracted transfer to Inter Milan almost certain to be approved, he is seen as the missing link which Inter needs to fulfil dreams of Serie A and European success.

It seems as if the clock has been turned back a decade or so when Van Basten and Klinsmann were about to take control of AC and Inter to lead their respective sides into an era of domination when even the mere mention of the city of Milan brought shudders to opposing sides from Europe and beyond. Now, as season 1997-98 approaches, the same can be said as AC and Inter begin the battle to make their Milan sides formidable in Europe.

Giuseppe Meazza Stadium

(San Siro)

Capacity: 85,847

The Giuseppe Meazza Stadium is home to both AC Milan and Internazionale (since 1947) and is capable of holding over 85,000 people with its unique tier (built for the 1990 World Cup) at a cost of almost \$100 million). The stadium capital of Europe has a fittingly identified by its system of external ramps that hug the outside walls, rounded corners and cavernous interior covered by a plexiglass roof leaving the pitch visible from above - the appearance of a giant domed glass.

Matched in Europe perhaps only with Barcelona's Nou Camp, the stadium is the palace for the royalty of football.

Brazilian side which is hot favourite to win World Cup title number five next year in France.

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Now, as season 1997-98 approaches, the same can be said as AC and Inter re-ignite the battle to make their Milan sides the most formidable in Europe.



Milan Associazione Calcio

AC Milan was founded by a group of ex-patriate Englishmen in 1899. It was originally called Milan Football and Cricket Club, and to this day the locals still call it 'Milan' rather than the Italian 'Milano'. The strip was designed as narrow black and red stripes.

Year of formation: 1899

President: Silvio Berlusconi

Coach for season 1997-98:

Pablo Capello

Major Signing: Patrick Klivert

Major Honours:

Serie A Titles: 15

Italian Cups: 4

European Champions Cup: 5

European Cup Winners' Cup: 2

European Super Cup: 3

World Club Cup: 3

Inter-Milan Football Club

On the night of 9 March 1908,

"Internazionale Football Club of Milan" was born. It was called "Internazionale" because it was open to all players and not only to the Italians (the first captain, Mankin, was Swiss). It was the result of a rebel group previously associated with Milan AC. The colours of the club were gold, black and blue which have remained through to the present day.

Year of formation: 1908

President: Massimo Moratti

Coach for season 1997-98: Gigi Simon

Major Signing: Ronaldo

Major Honours:

Serie A Titles: 13

Italian Cups: 3

European Champions Cup: 2

UEFA Cup: 2

European Super Cup: 2

World Club Cup: 2

Giuseppe Meazza Stadium

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Capacity: 85,847

The Giuseppe Meazza Stadium is home to both AC Milan and Internazionale (since 1947) and is capable of holding over 85,000 people with its unique third tier (built for the 1990 World Cup at a cost of almost \$100 million). The football capital of Europe has a fitting home. Identified by its system of external access ramps that hug the outside walls, the rounded corners and cavernous interiors - covered by a plexiglass roof leaving only the pitch visible from above - lead to the appearance of a giant domed greenhouse.

Matched in Europe perhaps only by Barcelona's Nou Camp, the stadium is a palace for the royalty of football.

Who was Giuseppe Meazza?

Giuseppe Meazza was a key member of the Italian team during the World Cup victories of 1934 and 1938. He was a prominent member of Inter's side in the 30s, winning the 1938 title and the first Italian Cup in 1939. Giuseppe Meazza finished his career with Milan AC and Juventus, but it was at Inter that he became a legend. He scored for Inter 224 times in 248 matches. The city of Milan will never forget him. After the San Siro was renovated for Italia '90 it was officially renamed the Giuseppe Meazza Stadium.

Did you know?

In the early years of fascism in Italy the Internazionale Football Club was forced to merge with the Milanese Unione Sportiva and change name and badge. But



the supporters remained loyal to the black and blue and the entire stadium continued to resonate with "Forza Inter".

In December 1932, the club received permission to combine the two names. It then became Ambrosiana-Inter until October 1945, when it was simply called Inter.

General Baresi retires

It was with a touch of sadness that Franco Baresi, the defensive general who redefined the sweeper position in a career that spanned 20 years with AC Milan, announced his retirement in late June.

Baresi, who marshalled his troops with the discipline of an army officer, decided to hang up his boots for good following AC Milan's worst season since the early 1980s.

Ironically, Baresi was one of Milan's better players for the season and despite his age he performed admirably. However it was quite clear that his 37-year-old legs were not as quick as in previous campaigns and although all Milan fans would have loved nothing more than to see the wily old trooper see out another season - especially with the return of Fabio Capello as coach - it was Baresi who decided that enough was enough.

However, it was always destined that when this day came it would simply be a case of Franco moving into another role within the club and sure enough this is exactly what he is doing. Following a short break Baresi moved into the front office as vice president in charge of Milan's junior teams.

As a player Baresi helped Milan capture six Italian first-division club titles, as well as three European Champions Cups and two Intercontinental Cups.

He was the anchor of a backline that set new standards for stinginess in Italian soccer, widely considered the toughest defensive league. The 1993-94 Milan team captained by Baresi set a Serie A record by allowing just 15 goals in 34 league games.

Baresi was a member of the Azzurri for three World Cups and was captain of the side that lost the 1994 World Cup final to Brazil

following a penalty shootout - in which he missed a crucial spotkick.

Baresi retired from the Azzurri in October 1994 following 81 proud appearances in the Italian jersey and may be considered unlucky not to have added a World Cup winners medal to the dozens of other trophies and awards in his trophy cabinet.



FACT FILE

Born: Travagliato, Brescia
Date of birth: 08-05-1960
Weight: 70kg
Height: 1.76m
Serie A debut: 23 April 1978 v. Verona (2-1 win to Milan)
Titles: 6 Serie A championships, 3 European Cups, 2 Intercontinental Cups, 3 European Super Cups, 4 Italian Super Cups, 4 Italian Super Cups
Matches for Italy: 81
Goals for Italy: 1
Serie A matches for Milan: 111
Serie A goals: 1
Serie B matches for Milan: 61
European Cup matches: 67

The official ball

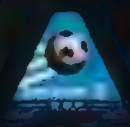
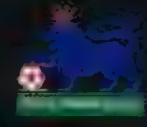


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The Sydney cha

Australia's national league is foot
HAMILTON investigates the harbo

If nothing else, the 1996/97 season showed time is beginning to catch up with the 'old guard' in the Ericsson Cup. Sydney saw a distinct shift in fortune as the traditional heartlands of Australia—Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide—moved back seat as emerging centres of football initiative.

It was more than just Brisbane winning the premiership, although that was the first time a team from outside the traditional strongholds had taken the national title was symbolic in itself.

But Brisbane, Perth and Wollongong have achievements in front of recent



challenge

Australia's national league is looking stronger than ever, but are the Sydney clubs lagging behind? IAN HAMILTON investigates the harbour city's soccer future.

If nothing else, the 1996/97 season showed time is beginning to run out for the 'old guard' in the Eriasson Cup. The season saw a distinct shift in fortunes. The traditional heartlands of Australian soccer, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide took a back seat as emerging centres took the initiative.

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But Brisbane, Perth and Wollongong's achievements in front of record crowds

show that an advantage as far as taking Australian soccer into the mainstream lies with those clubs who can truly boast their whole city is behind them. Add a bit of visionary marketing and the sky is the limit. Cross-town support is something Sydney United, Marconi, UTS Olympic, the Knights and South Melbourne have never had, although they are now trying hard to achieve it.

With talk of a merger in Adelaide and the possibility of the failed Collingwood experiment turning into a Carlton success, those two cities may be moving with the times - but what of Sydney?



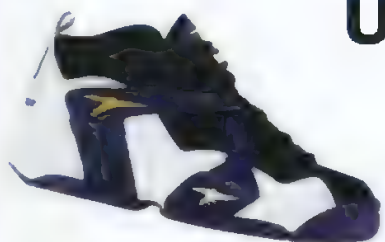
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there is no reason to expect that

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the Canberra experience repeated

The Sydney Cosmos syndicate
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reflected in senior level success wi
Warringah Dolphins in the state su

Seahawks syndicate spokesma
Thompson claims plenty of private

Soccer Australia chairman David Hill has already shown his capacity for ruthlessness and there is no reason to expect that to change.

"All the clubs have to radically change and the traditional clubs are going to have some difficulty," Hill says. "They can't keep doing things the same old way, they need to innovate and change and reform and they need to recapitalise. Perth has been more progressive than all the Sydney clubs, and I think Carlton will be (as well).

"We have also acknowledged there will be new teams coming in and that suggests some of the traditional clubs won't make it."

To varying degrees, all three Sydney clubs are trying to widen their appeal beyond the ethnic communities that spawned them, all three recognise where they might go if they could harness a mainstream Sydney supporter base, but all three are yet to do it. A 40,000 turnout at Lang Park and regular 15,000 crowds in Perth have put the writing on the wall.

If they don't begin to make inroads, the queue of would-be Sydney national league representatives will grow and become increasingly attractive to Soccer Australia.

It is finalising its much-vaunted five year plan and it will contain a sting in the tail for the old Sydney and Melbourne clubs. The plan involves a significant shift in policy which places new league aspirants on a more even footing when competing for admission against existing crosstown rivals.

"We are going to make it easier for them," Hill says. "What we've said before is 'Join the queue, we've already got three Sydney teams'. What we'll be doing in future is saying 'If you meet these conditions then we'll admit you'."

Old or new, clubs will have to have a strong capital base. Soccer Australia does not want the Canberra experience repeated.

The Sydney Cosmos syndicate has given up for now, so the Manly Seahawks is the leading contender, planning to apply soon for the 1998/99 season. A northern beaches Sydney team playing at Brookvale Oval has certain natural advantages. A strong junior and school penetration of the sport in that area is already reflected in senior level success with the Warringah Dolphins in the state super league.

Seahawks syndicate spokesman John Thompson claims plenty of private capital back-



In spite of a significant financial shortfall last year, Marconi remains one of the league's wealthiest clubs.

up and if that's true, Soccer Australia will be interested

Says Hill: "Over the next five years we want to see very significant growth and

"We have also acknowledged there will be new teams coming in and that suggests some of the traditional clubs won't make it."

progress of the national league and clubs. We don't want to be playing before crowds of 6000, but regularly before crowds of 20,000 five years from now."

MARCONI-FAIRFIELD

Strengths: Financial backing of the social club. First class facilities.

Weaknesses: Headquarters on Sydney's fringe. Club tradition

demands team always at or near the top.

Marconi has no such financial or capital question marks. The multi-million dollar social and recreational complex that has been built up around the soccer club ensures it will remain one of the wealthy national league clubs.

The Fairfielders are reputed to have lost \$600,000 on soccer last year, while Olympic has a deficit of just \$50,000. Yet Marconi feels its loss much less.

Marconi remains on the fringe of the Sydney landscape both geographically and in a sporting sense. Without argument it's a broad-based club very representative of western Sydney, but it too has failed to reach critical mass in support for its glamour team.

"Broadening of the appeal is something that is genuine here at Marconi. When you have a membership of 115 different backgrounds you are not mono ethnic," says Ross Musso, marketing manager at the soccer club.

"I think our weakest link is public transport to Marconi Stadium so we are organising buses from city areas for fans who really want to get to a game."

The average crowd at Bossley Park this season increased from just under 5000 to 5786 and Musso says a realistic aim is to increase patronage by 10 per cent each year.

For Marconi, the plan is to build, literally, on its existing strengths, concentrating on improving facilities with a new 2500-space car park ready for next season and better spectator comfort.

Also important is merchandising the club's image around the sky blue colour scheme with its strong association with the south western districts.

SYDNEY UNITED

Strengths: Unending flow of junior talent. Playing at Parramatta.

Weaknesses: Half minor premiership-winning team gone. Perception that it is still a club for

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Croatians. Headquarters on
Sydney's fringe.

Despite its domination of the
competition this year, the club
whose name suggests it
represents a city of four million
could only muster modest
crowds - an average of 6157
in 1996/97, and just 8059 for
a semi final match where a
spot in the grand final was up
for grabs.

A pragmatic Ivan Simic, United
President, concedes this is not
enough.

"Sydney and Melbourne (clubs)
failed miserably in attracting the
support. We are now falling behind
teams like Brisbane and Perth.

But his problems are more
The legacy of producing such a
young side is that United has lost
in one go - including coach Bruce
- because the money is just not
keep them, prompting some to
club is on the verge of falling apart.

Chances are replacements
found locally before too long, a
unending flow of talent from the
community.

"We have the best youth teams
country. I mean, we could have
successful teams in the national
Simic says.

He remains optimistic and
full-time professionalism and "I
never seen before in Australia
from the club next season, sports
marketing successes of Perth and
Wollongong and harnessing the
cloud of former Liberal leader
Hewson.

Some big names are being courted
new sponsorship and marketing
says.

"Unless we have someone like
going into bat for us we would
see them, let alone get them to

"It's absolutely important that
happens for us but I'm sure the
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Croatians. Headquarters on Sydney's fringe.

Despite its domination of the competition this year, the club whose name suggests it represents a city of four million could only muster modest crowds - an average of 6157 in 1996/97, and just 8059 for a semi final match where a spot in the grand final was up for grabs.

A pragmatic Ivan Simic, United's President, concedes this is not good enough.

"Sydney and Melbourne (clubs) have failed miserably in attracting that bigger support. We are now falling behind other teams like Brisbane and Perth."

But his problems are more immediate. The legacy of producing such a good young side is that United has lost half of it in one go - including coach Branko Culina - because the money is just not there to keep them, prompting some to say the club is on the verge of falling over.

Chances are replacements will be found locally before too long, such is the unending flow of talent from the Croatian community.

"We have the best youth team in the country. I mean, we could have two successful teams in the national league," Simic says.

He remains optimistic and promises full-time professionalism and "something never seen before in Australian soccer" from the club next season, spurred by the marketing successes of Perth and Wollongong and harnessing the corporate clout of former Liberal leader John Hewson.

Some big names are being courted in new sponsorship and marketing, Simic says.

"Unless we have someone like Hewson going into bat for us we would never even see them, let alone get them to talk to us.

"It's absolutely important that it happens for us but I'm sure that the measures we're taking now will be a success for us. You need teams in Sydney

and Melbourne, but they need to be successful on and off the park."

A move to Parramatta Stadium is seen as vital, especially after successful crowds for most competition matches played there last season. It's not so much the facilities but the location - a lot closer to the potential supporter base than Edensor Park on sprawling Sydney's western fringe (yet only a kilometre from Marconi's Bossley Park).

UTS OLYMPIC

Strengths: *Strong supporter base and tradition.*

Weaknesses: *Lack of stable financial backing. Tendency to go through coaches like disposable razors.*

Olympic has a huge tract of the city all to itself if it wants it - the inner city, north shore and southern suburbs, including the vacuum that has existed in the powerful St George junior region since its senior club folded. In a city the size of Sydney, this is a vast pool of potential - and yet it remains untapped by the club, because it's hamstrung by its lack of a solid financial base.

Of the old-stagers in Sydney, Olympic is arguably the one most prepared to go out and embrace the wider community - even if out of financial necessity.

"We would like the wider community to own the club," says club chief executive Simon Constantinides. But capital is the magic word, he says.

Club chairman and former Labor

politician

Gary Punch has been brought in to build bridges with the mainstream sporting public, in particular, an equity agreement with the Super League team, Canterbury Bulldogs. While Olympic are now playing at Belmore with the Bulldogs, the real prize still eludes Punch and only with the support of 10 Greek businessmen does the club continue.

Punch and Constantinides have also knocked on the doors of league club Sydney City Roosters and basketball's Sydney Kings, looking for a partnership and equity injection that will give the club the financial clout it needs to do what it knows it must to survive.

"That is the crux. Had I a tenth of the marketing budget of the Bulldogs, we would have gone ahead in leaps and bounds," Constantinides says. "We would have been another Sydney Swans."

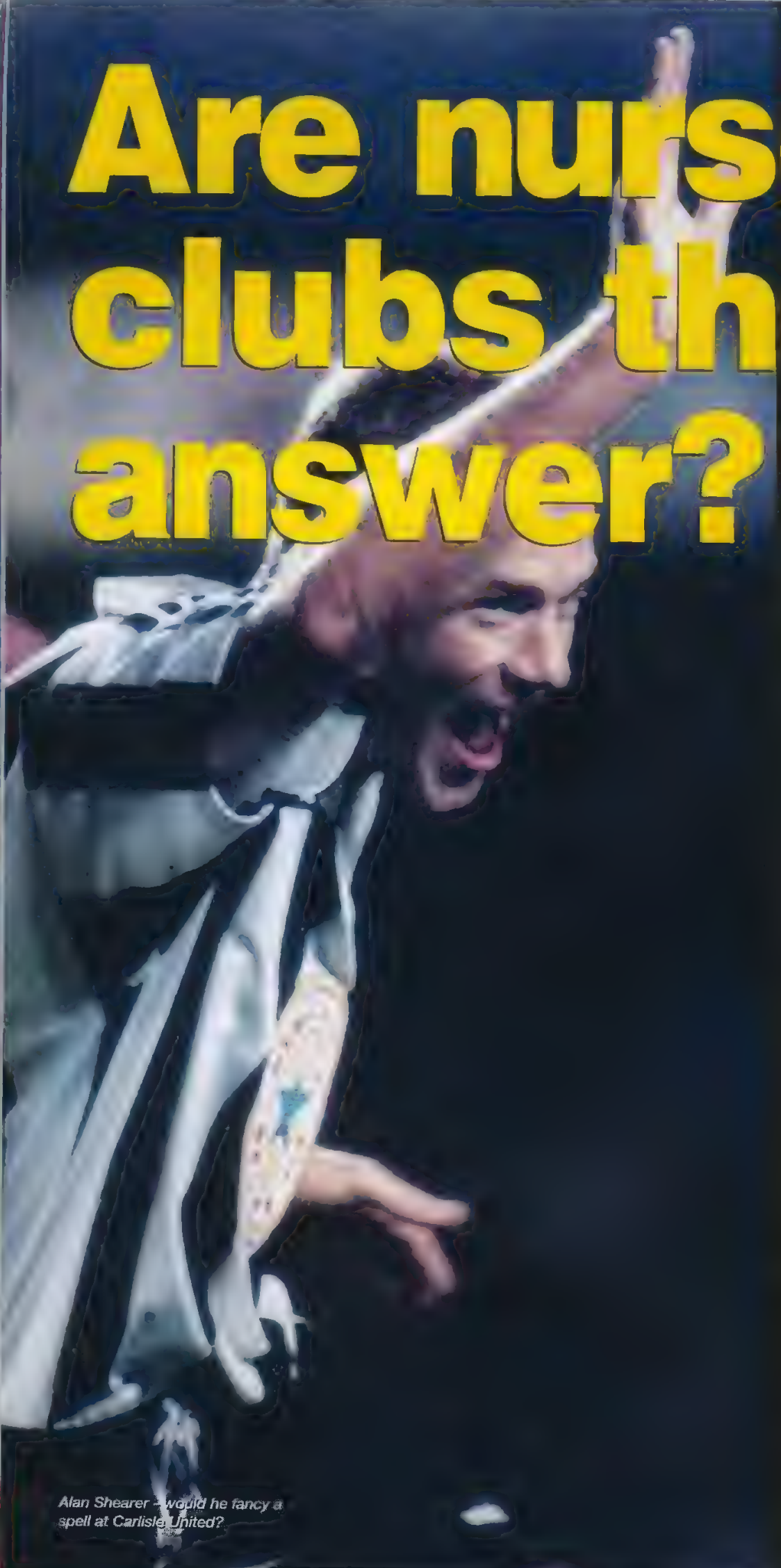
So far negotiations have stumbled on how much control should be handed over in return for capital - the Bulldogs and Kings wanted a takeover.

But the pot of gold, should it eventuate, is still at least another season away whether it's privatisation or joint venture, and in the meantime the club's aim is to increase crowds to the nine to 10 thousand mark and finish in the top three.

"Our crowds are affected seriously by results, but even after a poor season on the park we had an average crowd of 7100 per match."



Are nursery clubs the answer?



Spanish clubs have been adopting sides from the lower divisions to act as their 'nurseries' for years, and now the practice seems set to become commonplace in England. MICKY BROCK explains.

In recent years, as the Liverpools and Manchester Uniteds of English football have become ever more powerful in the Rupert Murdoch pay-TV era, lower division clubs have begun to feel the pinch. Recently, for example, Gillingham and Brighton have suffered through a lack of finances and been saved from the brink by their supporters rallying around.

Ground improvements and having to buy players have taken their toll to such an extent that they cannot compete to the standards of other sides in their divisions. The knock-on effect has seen poor results coupled with falling attendances which translates into a lower generation of funds through the associated areas of gate receipts, merchandise etc.

This term we've already seen Millwall, reputedly \$40 million in debt, and Bournemouth calling in the receivers with the goodwill of the supporter base again being crucial to the clubs' survival chances. This is neither a sound business logic to work by nor have the fans an endless flow of resources to keep pulling their clubs from the mire.

With the Premier League commanding the lion's share from satellite TV, around \$1 over the next three to four years, additional \$75 million plus sponsors Carling, not forgetting massive merchandising machines now exist. It has become a 'win and them' from whichever side the fence you view it.

The wealthy players in this the Premier League clubs - moral, if not legal, obligation to maintain grass roots football always be in their best interests.

Phil Carling, Marketing Manager of the English FA, recently told Australia: 'I'm sure the club will be relied upon to spend the cash but if you're the Chairman of many clubs are these days, the result of the next game played, a bearing on the stock market, your club etc, the temptation and spend a great deal on a players will always be there. Maldini of the Italian league is an example.

"Chelsea were recently quoted as paying \$35 million for him on the credit of their Chairman Ken Bates. I thought he was buying the whole AC Milan side for that amount. It goes to show that the Italian like all clubs world-wide, the in England these days and so 'upping the ante' accordingly. It would be nice to think that monies by the clubs wouldn't be spent on players, but that some of it would go to the lower leagues in one way or other."

One form could be through 'clubs'. If Liverpool adopted Newcastle took on Carlisle, you expect fans of the division to be delighted. However, while it would be wonderful for the Foxes to perhaps, Alan Shearer or Les Ferdinand in the side as they regain fitness from injury etc, there are also potential pitfalls to the scheme.

Alan Shearer - would he fancy a spell at Carlisle United?

With the Premier League sides commanding the lion's share of revenue from satellite TV, around \$1.3 billion over the next three to four years and an additional \$75 million plus from their sponsors Carling, not forgetting via the massive merchandising machines that now exist, it has become a case of 'us and them' from whichever side of the fence you view it.

The wealthy players in this scenario - the Premier League clubs - have a moral, if not legal, obligation to maintain grass roots football as it will always be in their best interests to do.

Phil Carling, Marketing Manager of the English FA, recently told Soccer Australia: "I'm sure the clubs can be relied upon to spend the cash wisely but if you're the Chairman of a PLC, as many clubs are these days, and the result of the next game played will have a bearing on the stock market prices of your club etc, the temptation to go out and spend a great deal on a couple of players will always be there - Paolo Maldini of the Italian league, for example.

"Chelsea were recently quoted £17 million (\$35 million) for him and to the credit of their Chairman Ken Bates, he thought he was buying the whole of the AC Milan side for that amount. But it goes to show that the Italians know, like all clubs world-wide, the money is in England these days and so are 'upping the ante' accordingly. "It would be nice to think that monies generated by the clubs wouldn't be spent solely on players, but that some of it finds its way to the lower leagues in some form or other."

One form could be through 'nursery clubs'. If Liverpool adopted Crewe or Newcastle took on Carlisle, you would expect fans of the division three sides to be delighted. However, while it may be wonderful for the Foxes to see, perhaps, Alan Shearer or Les Ferdinand in the side as they regain fitness after injury etc, there are also potential pitfalls to the scheme.

The up side:

- Smaller clubs would be looked after by the "senior partner", financial worries becoming a thing of the past.

- The appearance of some of the English game's 'greats' would be a bonus for the little sides and their supporters.

- Attendances should improve as fans turn out to see Shearer, Beckham or Ian Wright playing at Southend or Cardiff. Along with increased attendances, increased revenue from associated areas such as merchandise, programme sales, food and drink etc.

- Best of all, these clubs would no longer have to look over their shoulders for the taxman as the assets, the bulk of the money, stay in England with the smaller clubs. Man Utd have been linked with the Milan sides of Italy and Arsenal have been mentioned as twinning with a number of French clubs. Under the Bosman ruling, free trade between the EEC countries can take place, but in other cases a transfer fee is applicable, something smaller sides rely upon to stay solvent.

Former England coach Don Howe is in favour of this idea. He believes the promising youngsters from Premiership sides should be sent to their adopted clubs to gain experience while awaiting the opportunity of a first team call up. It would help them see the 'other side' of the coin and educate them as to what life in the lower leagues is about and therefore, hopefully, improve them as players.

Life in the basement would help the skill levels of the youngsters as a result of regular competitive football. In addition, the skills of the Premier League sides would then be passed down to the lower echelons, culminating in a higher skill factor with the smaller sides creating more skilful players down the track. The 'adopted' can also look forward to playing the game without the worries connected with selling off their best players or having them 'poached' as they do now.

The down side:

- Players would be kept out of the side as injury and suspension victims regain fitness or serve out their penalty.

- What if the 'adopted' do so well under the scheme and move up the leagues while the fortunes of the 'parent' slumped?

- Could the adopted club ever become the better side as, under present rules, they would not be allowed to play in the same division as their parent club due to the possibility of a conflict of interest arising.

- Those clubs not adopted would be hard pressed to match it with those that are, and the introduction of semi-pro Division Three North and South leagues looms large in the distance, as used to exist.

- Could the adopted side purchase their own players or would they be told who's coming and to slot them into the system?

Without an overhaul to the present system, many of the smaller clubs will cease to exist as the rich get richer and the gulf between the leagues widens still further. The autonomy they now display would most likely become a thing of the past. Should they wish to purchase a player, it would be up to the 'parent' club as to whether this practice would take place, as would the style of play used (perhaps not a bad thing in many respects).

Just as the European Super League or Rangers and Celtic leaving the Scottish Premiership for southern climes may come to fruition in the future, realistically, nursery clubs will eventuate. It would seem they must if smaller clubs are to survive.

The long term effect of the current trend of importing players will mean fewer opportunities for home based players, the death of the smaller clubs going into receivership, resulting in a breakdown of the natural progression in the footballing production line.

In other words, not only will the leagues of England suffer, but the final scenario could prove a less effective national side on the world stage as young talent slips through the net instead of being caught by the second and third division sides.



LAVAZZA
CAFFÉ ESPRESSO

A nice young man

Kevin
to the

A nice young man



Kevin celebrates his goal that put the Olympics on their way to the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.



THE BLAKE FILES

Over the years, GREG BLAKE has forged a reputation as a fearless, intrepid and occasionally eccentric reporter. In the first of a regular series of celebrity interviews conducted exclusively for Soccer Australia, Blake goes one-on-one with Socceroos and Crystal Palace star, Kevin Muscat.

My Mum maintains that she is an excellent judge of character. She says Kevin Muscat looks like 'a very nice, well-groomed young man'. And, of course, he probably is. Which is why Muscat is more scary than any Wes Craven movie.

Opponents don't really sense the looming danger of the 'nice young man' until it's too late. By the time he's done some heavy hitting, almost invariably he leaves at least a couple of bells ringing up in the attic.

Whereas Vinnie Jones is a walking neon billboard which spells out intimidation in all shades of red, Muscat is to all outwards appearances quite the lovely young spiv: sleek but sinister.

Not that the kid can't play a bit - witness his goal in Hungary for the Socceroos earlier this year. He has also been the star turn in a couple of sparkling Aussie World Youth Championship campaigns - the last as skipper - and he was one of the few players still prepared to set an example when all around him whimpered and fled in his last full season at South Melbourne.

during a disastrous 1995/96 campaign.

Which makes it all the more irksome that his 44-game success story in England this year with first division Crystal Palace comes with all the associated drivel about 'proving his doubters wrong' and the 'surprise success story'.

Fact is, he didn't just pop out of a cereal box.

The 23-year-old utility was always going to scale a summit or two in the game, his heady blend of elegance and power apparent even in the early days as a spindly

GB - Kevin, welcome home.

KM - Thanks Blakie.

GB - Not at all, that was the easy part. So, how come within a couple of months of moving to Crystal Palace we're already getting press reports back here of how naughty you've been?

KM - Yeah, well fortunately enough I can sit here and say I only missed one game through suspension, so maybe some of the reports were misleading.

GB - But you are a hard man, aren't you?

face by a group of South Melbourne players.....

KM - Thoroughly deserved by the way.

GB - Thanks. Anyway, an unknown assailant managed to give me a couple of whacks across the bonce and the video replay was inconclusive. Do you know the culprit?

KM - Well, I do know the culprit, but I'm not one to rat on my mates. I've looked over the tapes couple of times myself and at the time both my hands were in the air.

GB - Possibly on the follow-through they were! Anyway, you always seem a bit guarded. Do you have a pathological hatred of journos?

KM - I think I have good relationship with most of the journos here and I certainly don't have any grudges against any of them. Although Johnny Warren has given me a bit of stick over the years, I haven't heard too much from him lately.

GB - So how do you cope with the Fleet Street mob, whom I believe are much worse than the pussies in the Aussie media?

KM - I haven't had too much to do with them.

GB - For that matter, how do you feel about opponents in any given game? Do they become your mortal enemy on the day?

KM - I don't think enemy. I mean, you're out there and you want to win just as much as the guy next to you and sometimes you do do silly things and you do do things that you regret later on. But it all happens on the park and as soon as you get off the park you have a beer and forget about it. It's on the park and you leave it there.

GB - How does thuggery in the English game compare to the type of bruising and batterings we dish out in Australia?

KM - I can only speak on behalf of the first division and I thought it was just so very competitive. Over in the UK there's none of this falling around and diving on the floor and all that sort of stuff.

If you can get up you get up, and if you

can't you just get off. The one good thing is that after the game you just meet in a bar and let bygones be bygones, and someone's given you a clip around the ear you just buy them a beer. You don't hold grudges.

GB - That's a relief. So you're a bloke who's misunderstood rather than a psychotic in desperate need of therapy?

KM - Yeah, I'm misunderstood.

GB - What about a change of team? You established yourself at Crystal Palace this year playing 44 games...

KM - That's 51, counting cup and play-off games.

GB - I'm not about to argue. And it is a pretty sensational effort first year. Does it get up your nose that the media here thinks that was a surprise that you did so well?

KM - To be fair, I was surprised myself that I played in so many games. Because you go over there with your head closed and I've come back feeling that I know so much more about the game than what goes on now. It has been a hard job for sure.

GB - Now you've got one Aussie on the team in Carl Veart. How's he doing?

KM - He had a sensational year. He was playing midfield and he scored a 10 or 11 goals, so he did really well.

GB - What about another Aussie? Mark Schwarzer. Do you hate the bastards for pulling off that save from you again, Bradford?

KM - Did you see that, Blakie?

GB - Yes, quite a few of us had a good laugh at your expense.

KM - Well, I'm not too happy with him either because he was trying to make it that it was an easy save. I'm telling you he had to extend his fingernails to get his foot on that one.

GB - Do you keep in contact with the Aussie boys over there?

KM - Yeah, very much so. I try to get out regularly with the guys as well. I don't want you're hanging around with these Porcupines so long you start speaking like them. It's even worse when you pick up the phone and call Craig Moore!



Muscat on the ball for Australia against Sweden.

kid with Sunshine George Cross in the national league.

Now, about that white line fever. Does he need a good therapist, or is Kevin Muscat just a misunderstood young boy?

It was the spectre of that darker side I had hoped to explore when the 'smiling assassin' was back on home soil for the recent World Cup campaign.

KM - I don't look at myself as a hard man. I go out there and I'm always wanting to win for myself and the team and if sometimes I get overheated then yes, I'll put my hand up and say that I've done some stupid things.

GB - I remember shooting a TV story for SBS a couple of years back which entailed me getting a cake shoved in my

can't you just get off. The one good thing is that after the game you just meet in the bar and let bygones be bygones, and if someone's given you a clip around the ear, you just buy them a beer. You don't hold grudges.

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KM - To be fair, I was surprised myself that I played in so many games. Because you go over there with your eyes closed and I've come back feeling that I know so much more about the game and what goes on now. It has been a hard year, for sure.

GB - Now you've got one Aussie mate on the team in Carl Veart. How's he doing?

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KM - Yeah, very much so. I try to get out regularly with the guys as well. I mean you're hanging around with these Poms for so long you start speaking like them. It's even worse when you pick up the phone and call Craig Moore!

GB - And you've said how much you also enjoy getting into camp with all the Australian boys again.

KM - It brings back a lot of memories. It's OK speaking to people on the phone and seeing them every now and then, but to get back into camp and all the banter and all the things that go on, you really do miss that. To get back in and have the micky taken out of you and giving as much as you get, it's great.

GB - What 'things' actually do go on?

KM - Next question!

GB - Speaking of that Aussie parochialism, you've made quite a point of saying how much you're looking forward to playing in front of the Aussie crowds again because of how parochial they are.

KM - I sincerely mean it. I've got good memories of any Australian crowd that I've played in front of and the thing that sticks out in my mind is the 1993 World Youth Cup. I'll never forget the kind of support we did get there and I'll be grateful for it until the day I retire.

GB - I understand you're also now a bit of a crowd favorite at Selhurst Park?

KM - Yeah, I think I've got on alright there this year and I think I've made quite a few friends over there as well. I mean, over there people appreciate...the Aussie attitude goes a long way over in England. You know, the never say-die, have a go thing.

GB - You proved yourself to be a great Aussie captain during the World Youth Championships. Do you think that sort of responsibility and example-setting maybe helps you pull your head in a bit and keeps you focused on the game?

KM - No, I don't think so. But I remember Johnny Warren giving me a bit of stick, saying that I maybe shouldn't have been captain because I'd maybe get suspended a couple of times and this and that.

I read all that and accepted it, and maybe he had a point, but I was waiting for him after the tournament to come and apologise because I don't recall being suspended once. When you're wrong you normally apologise. I suppose it just gives

someone something to do.

GB - Terry Venables?

KM - So far, so good and I don't think there is a person in Australia who could complain. Personally I think the thing is that he gets his message across to the players very quickly. He can make you learn very quickly.

GB - You're not going to Portsmouth by any chance?

KM - No way, I'm not pushing that up.

GB - Now you are a very parochial lad. Do you look ahead and consider maybe becoming Australian captain one day?

KM - That's a difficult one. At the moment I'm just happy to force myself into the squad. It's a fairly big squad and the number of players now putting their hands



up and wanting to be part of the Australian team is amazing. Everyone wants to be involved. I just want to be involved in as many Australian games as possible and if anything more comes of it, good luck.

GB - OK, here's the test and possibly the most telling insight into Kevin Muscat's character. It's 2003 and you're getting ready for the World Cup qualifiers, Aurelio Vidmar is a wheezing geriatric and it's between you and 'Viddy' for the captaincy. Would you break his leg at training to get it?

KM - No, he's a good mate of mine.....but that's the only reason why.

Still going strong

'If you think my Popeye impersonation is good, you should see my Godzilla.' Arnie does his party piece during a Socceroo encounter

You can take Graham Arnold out of Australia but can you take the Aussie out of Graham Arnold?
ROBERT WHEATLEY spoke to the 33-year-old Socceroo striker.

With the exception of Milan Ivanovic, Graham Arnold is the oldest member of the current Socceroo outfit. He is involved in his fourth World Cup campaign and dislikes the label 'veteran' or 'war-horse' when defining his current status.

"I operate in a football environment with first class games every three days in Japan. As professionals we have less than a month's break a year. I don't have time to get unfit. Yes I'm approaching 34, but I feel physically good. That attitude of hitting 30 meaning it's time to stop is bullshit."

We get the point Graham! Does that suggest you have something substantial to offer the '98 campaign? "If I didn't I wouldn't be here. Even if I just help the side get through qualification, that's a bonus. I always ask Charlie (Yankos) or Dave (Ratcliffe) to judge me, not on one game, but on two or three performances and the feedback from them is I'm not finished."

Seven seasons in Europe and more recently in Japan have not dissipated Arnold's passion to perform for Australia, and with the future in mind, in Australia. However, terminating a lucrative J-League contract with Sanfrecce Hiroshima to revert to playing and/or managerial commitments for the 1997/98 Ericsson Cup season would be a difficult move.

A one year option in Hiroshima may be the magnet that cancels out an immediate move down under.

Activity on the local scene however, has not escaped Arnold's interest. "Farina has been a real success and believe me Krncevic will have a big impact. You can't replace the experience we've had. The trend of Aussies returning home really interests me."

And what about home? "I feel very strongly about it. I bought property back here and I'm 150 per cent behind putting something back into the game."

Scratching the surface of Arnold's interest in matters local is akin to a raw nerve. Sensitive and therapeutic at club level the days of sign on fees. In discussions with Sydney (United) recently, I told them to divide the fee as salary in the form of training bonuses make the bonuses bigger and then seriously about scrapping the training system and budget around it."

Arnold's source of opinions on football topics is wide-ranging and largely the result of influence from highly-credentialed coaches including (Belgian World Cup defender) and Rijksbergen (former Dutch international). Arnold's possible coaching style is understandably player-orientated at this stage of his career.

"Everyone knows I was not a fair player, but I'm the one up for the routine, but I never one to complain. I'm happier with Venables' approach."

"I would adopt a hands on approach and be an attacking coach. I know they're up to and I would have a lot of input for players. In Europe if you are in a bad game you still must think about making the guy beside you have a good one."

Arnold pinpoints one major problem with the overseas structure is the lack of communication. "Managers are harder with discipline especially if you are assigned a job. A lot of time is devoted to analysing weaknesses in a deep study of the opposition. When I think back to 'mad dog' Frank (Arok) in the mid 80s I don't think it is really valid any more. When Venables (Venables) says you can go out and play with professionalism in the squad most players don't. A few actually do. The drive to succeed is so strong."

Scratching the surface of Arnold's interest in matters local is akin to striking a raw nerve. Sensitive and therapeutic. "At club level the days of sign on fees are over. In discussions with Sydney (United) recently, I told them to divide this money as salary in the form of training money, make the bonuses bigger and think seriously about scrapping the transfer system and budget around it."

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"Everyone knows I was not a fan of the one up front routine, but I was never one to complain. I'm a lot happier with the Venables approach."

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Arnold pinpoints one major difference with the overseas structure is detail. "Managers are harder with discipline especially if you are assigned a specific job. A lot of time is devoted to picking weaknesses in a deep study of opponents. When I think back to 'mad dog' days of Frank (Arok) in the mid-80s I don't think it is really valid any more. When Terry (Venables) says you can go out, the professionalism in the squad means few actually do. The drive to succeed is so strong."

And one senses that the formerly laconic Arnold has gained a significantly sharper edge to his approach since his 1988 departure. 'Goal-a-game Arnie' was a title earned by the striker for his prolific goalscoring efforts in the late 80s. By 1997 his 51 internationals and 17 goals had seen this ratio drop to a goal every three outings.

Was he disturbed by this pattern? "Everyone knows I was not a fan of the one up front routine, but I was never one to complain. Sure I enjoyed playing for Australia but I didn't appreciate the criticism. I'm a lot happier with the Venables approach."

The big difference revolves around the fullback versus flankmen approach.

"Slater and Lazaridis are naturally born wingers not converted overlapping fullbacks. Against Hungary I was instructed to drop back to drag the stopper out of position. It allowed Viddy (Aurelio Vidmar) to ghost in to the far post."

The fact that Vidmar went on to score the third Australian goal in Budapest was proof of Arnold's present summation of his game and ties together his worth to the Socceroo unit. In the past what we were hoping for was mistakes from defenders. I believe my best position is a deep striker and away from home I was used as a second striker for my work-rate."

He may not be scoring goals for his country at the same rate as he did in his early days, but judging from the Socceroos' World Cup qualifiers against New Zealand in July, national coach Terry Venables still regards Arnold as an integral part of his France '98 plans.

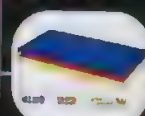
His work-rate and commitment against the Kiwis couldn't fail to have impressed Tel, and come November, in the footballing cauldron of Seoul, Riyadh or Tehran, it would surprise no-one if the former England supremo looks to Graham Arnold to provide the cutting edge up front.

It wouldn't be the first time Australia has asked the indefatigable striker to put his body on the line for the green and gold. And it probably won't be the last.



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Branko challenges

Branko Culina has been handed the task of breathing new life into last season's wooden spooners, Canberra Cosmos. But he's not daunted by what lies ahead, as he explains to BRUCE CAMPBELL.

The arrival of Branko Culina in Canberra was hailed with almost messiah-like acclamation. A packed press corps gathered saw his official arrival in the nation's capital, the like of which has rarely been seen in the troubled soccer city's recent past. And for his

difficult for a side which finished rock bottom last season to attract players, never mind compete with an open cheque book for the top liners. I've had a look at a lot of players but because so many from last season have headed overseas even mediocre players are now asking for a lot of money."

Faced with the serious consequences of buying a team, Culina has taken a more pragmatic look at the situation, refusing to be drawn into the kind of signings which could reverse the club's stock with its bank manager. Instead, he has come out strongly in

surprisingly, at least for those outside the club's inner sanctum, Culina has also targeted many of last season's players.

"A lot of players didn't have the kind of necessary commitment last season," says Paul Dee who was delighted to be asked to re-sign with the Cosmos. "That is a factor which won't re-appear this season - Branko Culina won't allow it."

"I think another problem was that there were too many players living out of town, but the coach has already said that everyone this season must live in Canberra. Add to that twice a day training sessions and there will be significant changes. I'm looking for a big year for myself and I know that a lot of other players are thinking exactly the same."

That Canberra residency rule is already likely to have cost the club a potential major coup with the lost signature of a current Socceroo the casualty of Culina's determination to enforce a policy that will apply to all players. The hopes of Paul Dee, a former AIS scholarship holder, are mirrored by others and now the talk in the dressing rooms is more of team spirit and a burning desire to get even fitter - a welcome sign with pre-season training starting in early August.

But another player is even more forthright in his assessment of differences between now and last season. He talks of a lack of discipline within the team which was maybe highlighted by the fact that end of season training sessions often had less than half a dozen first teamers on show. "When John Markovski was played as a lone striker at home that was probably about the end of the road," he said. "There was a lot of unrest amongst the players."

That, as they say, is in the past and it is a subject on which Branko Culina won't be drawn. Instead, he is more interested in making inroads into the task in front of him, a task which he hopes will culminate in the Cosmos making the top six.

"Look, there has to be a lot of things

happening off the park as well," he says. "Already the club has signed a major sponsorship deal which is worth \$750,000. There are other sponsors also coming to themselves to the club and that side looks very healthy. But we need to get the crowds turning up at our home matches that is why there is so much work to be done here."

The Cosmos have recently moved into plush new premises in Deakin, a professional sector of the capital. Attendance has also been a dramatic increase

"I don't think for a moment that I'm coming to town and going to be the cure-all that so many people are looking for. There are no quick-fixes in soccer, just an awful lot of hard work."

levels to help with the workload being put on by the new drive. Professional marketing consultants, professional publicists, a designed youth coaching system and a link with an army of volunteer workers are signs of a club on the move.

In other years those changes would not have been enough to propel any club to the forefront of the league but the harsh reality is that clubs like Perth Glory, Brisbane Roar, South Melbourne and Marconi are all stretching out their corporate muscles and that new guys Carlton and that leave one spot in the top echelon for the other clubs to battle over. If you include in the 'other' list last year's minor premiers, Sydney United, the task in front of Culina is a difficult one.



part Culina did everything that was asked from him on day one, including a string of radio, TV and print media interviews.

But the man who wears the Australian 'Coach of the Year' crown is no bumpkin - he knows that more than a smile and a charming personality is required to win over what has been labelled a hostile press on a more permanent basis.

"They are no fools," he says. "The press won't put up with losers, so now the real hard work begins."

And for the new Canberra Cosmos coach day two of "hard work" meant sifting through a want-list of players. "I know who I want to come to Canberra," Culina adds. "but the trouble is that every other club in Australia wants the exact same players."

"We all want the Tapais, the Harpers and the Fosters - but the truth is that it is very

favour of a local policy.

"I think that Canberra as a soccer region has a lot of talent," he says. "In the long run that is where the future of the Cosmos lies. But to be competitive we have to sign a few more experienced players."

And the first name on to paper under Culina's regime was that of former star, Michael Musitano. The stylish midfielder left town after just one season in the club's colours, heading for a new career with Adelaide City. But even the fame of scoring that dramatic 'golden goal' over Marconi in the play-offs wasn't enough to prevent one of Canberra's favourite sons being attracted back by the arrival of Culina.

Likewise, Andy Ravanello has signed from Marconi, a former Canberra Metro who has cause to be miffed at the lack of first team duty he saw with the Stallions. And

Changes the Cosmos

happening off the park as well," he says. "Already the club has signed a major sponsorship deal which is worth \$750,000. There are other sponsors also committing themselves to the club and that side of it looks very healthy. But we need to see bigger crowds turning up at our home matches and that is why there is so much work to be done here."

The Cosmos have recently moved into plush new premises in Deakin, the professional sector of the capital. And there has also been a dramatic increase in staffing

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levels to help with the workload being created by the new drive. Professional marketing consultants, professional publicists, a custom-designed youth coaching system and a closer link with an army of volunteer workers are signs of a club on the move.

In other years those changes would have been enough to propel any club to the forefront of the league but the harsh reality is that clubs like Perth Glory, Brisbane Strikers, South Melbourne and Marconi are already stretching out their corporate muscles. Add to that new guys Carlton and that leaves only one spot in the top echelon for the other nine clubs to battle over. If you include in that 'other' list last year's minor premiers, Sydney United, the task in front of Culina is obviously a difficult one.

"The richest clubs don't always get the best players," he says, "but we have to be honest with ourselves. There is a big task ahead of us. I believe that we can be competitive this season, otherwise I wouldn't be here. But I'm not stupid. I don't think for one moment that me coming to town is going to be the cure-all that some people are looking for - and I've gone out of my way to stress that to the board. There are no quick-fixes in soccer, just an awful lot of hard work. That is why I have come to Canberra."

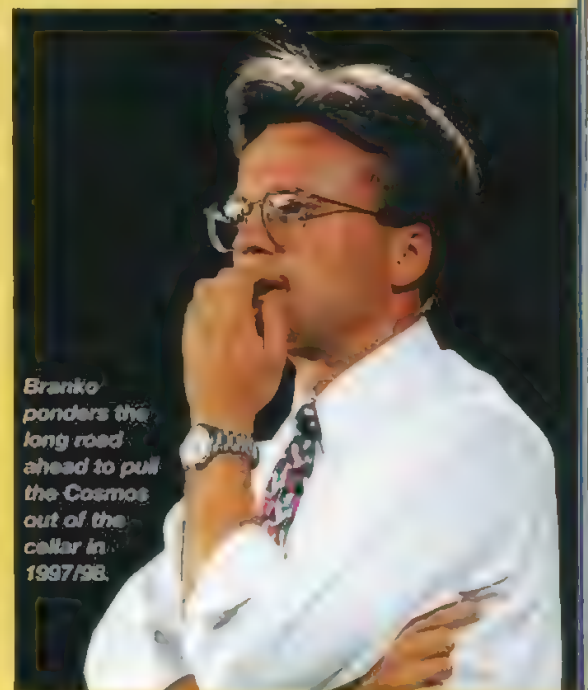
Maybe that isn't the kind of John Wayne fighting talk that some people want, but it has gone down well in the coffee bars of Canberra where a more realistic ask is that the side strives for a top six spot, even if in the final analysis they fall just short of the mark. That, after a season which is now engraved in the record books as the worst in national league history, would be a major turnaround. It would also be enough to enshrine the often-controversial Culina into cult-like hero status in a city which is fed up with its tag of 'huge potential'.

But, typically, the appointment of Culina has met with mixed reaction. Locally, he is already a hero - even after surviving the usual press inquisition over the club's decision not to appoint a local head coach. However, the mathematicians of soccer have come up with the kind of mind-boggling solution to the club's ambition in which his wages are being paid by Soccer Australia as part of a clandestine plot to see his eventual assumption of the role of Socceroo coach.

Culina smiles at that one, a story which has swept through Australian soccer like a bush fire. "I've heard it," he laughs. "But I won't deny that I would love to be involved at a higher level. Being part of the Young Socceroos campaign at the World Youth Cup was an eye-opener - it is so different. The higher level of professionalism is terrific and who wouldn't want to be part of that? Like anybody else I have ambitions but you just

can't wish yourself into a job, you have to earn it by a lot of hard work - and a lot of luck also."

Canberra will be hoping that Culina does eventually end up in a role with the Socceroos. That would mean that along the way the Cosmos have also attained their share of success. The club's accountant would also be hopeful that the rumours are true and that Soccer Australia might even pick up that wage tab, reportedly the highest in the Ericsson Cup. But there are those who are



happy whatever the Cosmos' new boss is earning, and whoever is paying it, because of the truth of the maxim that you only get what you pay for.

If Culina does end up as some kind of soccer messiah then they will certainly be dancing in the streets of Deakin. If not, then a nice little top six spot would suffice. Whatever, the Canberra Cosmos are already looking forward to a new home attendance record when they start next season on 4 October at Seiffert Stadium - against Culina's old side Sydney United.

Even the Soccer Australia fixtures computer seems to be playing its part in this fairytale.



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Au revoir, E



Au revoir, Eric



Andy Mo

Borussia Dortmund & G

SOCCER





Gianfranco Zola
Chelsea & Italy



Andy Moeller

Borussia Dortmund & Germany

Shaping up 1

Italian soccer is winding itself up again for another big 'campionato' following Juventus' dominant display last season. ANGELO STICCA reports.

Atalanta striker Filippo Inzaghi, who finished top scorer of the Serie A last season with 24 goals, has signed with title-holders Juventus. Inzaghi made his international debut in the Tournoi de France and if he can retain his form from last season, Cesare Maldini may put greater emphasis on him in the Azzurri side.

Inzaghi will link with newly-signed Daniele Fonseca from Roma, following the departure of Christian Vieri to Atletico Madrid. Vieri was sold for \$20 million in one of the shock transfers of the pre-season, as well as defending the domestic title.

German ace Jurgen Klinsmann has signed with Sampdoria, where he will link with Vincenzo Montella to form a highly potent striking partnership. Klinsmann, who left Bayern Munich following several disagreements, owns property in Genoa and is likely to retire in Italy with his family. His arrival has been warmly greeted by Samp fans, who needed a boost following the loss of old-favourite Roberto Mancini to Lazio.

Argentine World Cup-winning coach Cesar Luis Menotti has been appointed coach of Sampdoria. "I am happy to be able to coach Sampdoria, a serious, young and calm club that in 14 years has changed its coach only twice, and both times the choice

was theirs," he told reporters on arrival. "After 30 years in coaching, here I am finally in Italy," he said. "It's a huge satisfaction. It was hard to leave Independiente, where I had a great relationship with the fans, but this challenge fascinates me."

Alberto Malesani, formerly of second division side Chievo Verona, has taken over as coach of Fiorentina. Fiorentina had become frustrated by the lack of league success under Claudio Ranieri. Fiorentina reached the semi-finals of the European Cup Winners' Cup, before surrendering to Bobby Robson's Barcelona, but finished mid-table in the Italian championship.

Malesani, 43, has never handled a club before - having spent all his coaching career with Chievo, where he has a year of his current contract left.

Zvonimir Boban is likely to be linked with Parma this season as transfer details reached finalisation. Montenegrin Dejan Savicevic is also likely to be linked with France as his destination. The loss of these two internationals would add to a long list of Milan departures which includes Michael Reitziger, Christophe Dugarry, Franco Baresi and Mauro Tassotti, to name a few.

Graeme Souness has confirmed his return to Italy to coach Serie B side Padova. Souness, a former Scottish international captain who resigned in May as manager of English club Southampton, is expected to stay for at least two years. He played in Italy for Sampdoria from 1984 to 1987.

"I'm aware that Serie B in Italy is a very competitive league but I'm very confident," Souness told reporters. Torino, one of Italy's greatest clubs, finished this season ninth in Serie B, their worst performance on record. Fans will clearly be looking to Souness to take them into the top flight next year, a sentiment expressed on a banner in the Delle Alpi stadium.

Enrico Chiesa's Parma is among the favourites for this season's Serie A.

96-97 ITALIAN LEAGUE SOCCER HONOURS

European Cup: Juventus (league champions),

Parma (runners-up)

Cup Winners' Cup: Vicenza.

UEFA Cup: Internazionale, Lazio, Udinese, Sampdoria.

Relegated to Serie B: Reggina, Verona, Perugia, Cagliari.

Promoted to Serie A: Brescia, Empoli, Lecce, Bari.

ing up for Serie A

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TOP SCORERS 1996/1997 SERIE A

goals	penalties	player
24	6	Filippo Inzaghi (Atalanta)
22	-	Vincenzo Montella (Samp)
17	5	Abel Balbo (Roma)
16	-	Sandro Tovalieri (Cagliari)
15	1	Giuseppe Signori (Lazio)
15	-	Marco Negri (Perugia)
15	-	Roberto Mancini (Samp)
14	4	Youri Djorkaeff (Inter)
14	1	Enrico Chiesa (Parma)
14	1	Pasquale Luiso (Piacenza)
14	-	Oliver Bierhoff (Udinese)
13	2	Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina)
13	-	George Weah (Milan)
13	-	Paolo Poggi (Udinese)
13	4	Marcelo Otero (Vicenza)
12	-	Hernan Crespo (Parma)
12	1	Filippo Maniero (Sampdoria)
12	2	Marcio Amoroso (Udinese)
11	4	Igor Kolyvanov (Bologna)
11	-	Anselmo Robbiati (Fiorentina)
11	-	Maurizio Ganz (Inter)
10	-	Roberto Muzzi (Cagliari)

in Graeme," it read.

Brescia, Empoli, Lecce and Bari all move up to the top league next season, trading places with relegated Reggiana, Verona, Perugia and Cagliari, who now face their first season in division two since 1989-90.

Fabio Capello returned to take over at AC Milan after clinching the Spanish league title at Real Madrid. Arrigo Sacchi, former Italy national coach, took over at Milan late last year after Uruguayan Oscar Washington Zubarez had his resignation offer accepted.

Milan finished the season in 11th place, their lowest since they were relegated to Serie B in 1982, and will not be playing in European club competition next season.

Bortolo Mutti, who helped Piacenza escape relegation from Serie A, is Napoli's new coach.

Napoli sacked Luigi Simoni, their coach at the start of the season who is moving to Inter, after their league form slumped despite having reached the Italian Cup final. Simoni was replaced by temporary stand-in Vincenzo Montefusco.

Bari has confirmed Eugenio Fascetti as coach for their return to Serie A next

season. The confirmation knocked on the head media reports that the southern club was considering dumping Fascetti in favour of outgoing AC Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi. Fascetti was appointed coach in December 1995, when Bari were still in Serie A, in place of Giuseppe Materazzi. He kept his job after they were relegated at the end of that season and engineered Bari's return.

Roma has agreed with Germany's Bayer Leverkusen on the transfer to Italy of Brazilian midfielder Paulo Sergio.

Inter Milan continued an aggressive transfer campaign by signing midfielder Ze Elias, also from Bayer Leverkusen. Agents for the 20-year-old Brazilian had signed a four-year deal, with Inter paying Bayer 10 billion lire (\$6 million) for the defensive midfielder.

Ze Elias will earn 1.5 billion lire (\$900,000) per season and is seen as a replacement for England midfielder Paul Ince, who has signed with Liverpool. The Milan club has already picked up Argentine midfielder Diego Simeone from Atletico Madrid after signing Brazilian prodigy Ronaldo from Barcelona in a multi-million dollar deal that must still be approved by FIFA. Barcelona have refused to recognize the deal and soccer's world governing body was expected to make a pronouncement on the case as we went to press.

FINAL TABLE SEASON 1996-97

	Pts	W.	D.	L.	G+	G-
Juventus	67	17	14	3	71	29
Parma	63	16	9	7	51	26
Inter	59	15	14	7	51	35
Lazio	55	15	10	6	54	37
Udinese	54	15	9	10	52	32
Sampdoria	53	14	11	9	58	40
Bologna	49	13	10	11	49	44
Vicenza	47	13	11	11	45	39
Reggiana	43	10	15	9	40	41
Atalanta	42	11	17	12	41	50
Milan	40	11	16	13	40	57
Napoli	41	9	14	11	33	54
Roma	41	10	11	11	47	50
Fiorentina	37	9	9	17	40	77
Perugia	37	9	7	17	36	60
Piacenza	27	7	10	21	29	74
Verona	27	6	9	20	36	69
Reggiana	19	2	14	20	28	67

Forty-two years of pleas



AC Milan has won five European Cups including this 1994 triumph over Barcelona.

pleasure and pain



From next season UEFA will cast aside years of history and tradition and allow non-champion teams into the Champions League. Philip Micallef looks back at the enthralling history of the biggest, richest and most important club competition in the world.

Borussia Dortmund's marvellous victory over Juventus in the last Champions Cup final signalled the end of an era for a 42-year-old competition that became an instant hit with the world's football fans.

Ever since Real Madrid won the first five editions of the cup with a style of football rarely seen before or after, the competition has grown into a monster that has been very hard to tame.

From next season UEFA will bow to the inevitable and expand the competition in what is seen as a last-ditch attempt to avert a 'Super league', which the wealthy clubs of Europe have been wanting for decades.

There is no doubt that since Europe's top eight countries will each be allowed two teams in a revamped 24-team series, its quality will be higher.

But traditionalists find it hard to accept the notion that teams finishing runners-up in their domestic championships could play in a "Champions" League.

But, then again, what's tradition got to do with football? It's all about television and the big money it's pouring into the game.

It is worth recalling the great and not-so-great deeds that have characterised this magnificent concept from way back in late 1955 to the 1997 Munich final in May.



Juventus was unable to repeat its 1996 Champions' League victory in this year's final against Borussia Dortmund.

It was an era when the best of the best clashed for the biggest prize in world club football and in which every team, from Reykjavik to Rome and from Ankara to Amsterdam, dreamed of playing. Hundreds of clubs have never played in it and only the elite few, of course, have had the honour of actually winning it.

Real Madrid's feat of snaring the first five European Cups is still regarded as the highlight of the glamorous competition. Playing a type of virtuoso football centred on that inimitable leader Alfredo Di Stefano, Real are still considered the greatest-ever club team in Europe.

Few could compete with the likes of Joe Santamaria, Raymond Kopa, Francisco Gento and later Ferenc Puskas. Not even the great Didi of Brazil could get into that side.

The Madrilenos won with monotonous regularity but the quality of the football from those men in white was anything but.

For such a small country, Holland did particularly well to produce such a glorious team as Ajax, who won three European Cups in the early 70s with their so-called 'total football'.

If Real were the masters of the traditional, Ajax revolutionised the sport with their multi-purpose football based on

ultra-fit players who could fill any role, depending on the circumstances. Led on the field by young prince Johan Cruyff, Ajax often played liked kings.

Their motto that football should be played in the opposition's half rewarded them with plenty of honours, gave football a breath of fresh air and was chiefly responsible for ridding us of the dreaded man-to-man defending 'catenaccio' system

Milan showed the world the best of cosmopolitan Italian football and in so doing raised the profile of the European Cup worldwide.

employed by Italian clubs in the 60s. How could you shadow a striker who drops back to fullback and who should pick up a sweeper who spends most of the game on the attack?

Cruyff was not the only star of that wonderful team from Amsterdam. Piet Keizer was a constant menace on the left flank, Johan Neeskens was probably the toughest ever halfback and Ruud Krol was

an immaculate fullback who had the poise and skill of a winger.

Ajax, needless to say, provided the bulk of the two Dutch teams that reached two World Cup finals in 1974 and 1978.

AC Milan also left an indelible mark on the European game with their cultured high-powered football in the early 90s.

Milan showed the world the best of cosmopolitan Italian football and in so doing raised the profile of the European Cup worldwide.

It is partly due to the exploits of Marco Van Basten, Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard, Franco Baresi and Paolo Maldini that international club soccer has become more popular in such countries as the United States, Japan and Australia.

Milan reached their peak in 1989 when they crushed Real 5-0 in the semi-finals and Steaua Bucharest 4-0 in the final. Their football was based on a watertight defence, a pressing game in midfield and attacking football at its finest and most deadly.

Liverpool were the only British team that could play the Europeans at their own game and beat them. In a glorious period in the late 70s and early 80s the boys from Anfield won four European Cups thanks mainly to their magnificent passing game and all-round ability.

Liverpool had fewer stars than Real Ajax or Milan but their functional football was just as effective and eye-catching. The Reds earned respect around the world for the way they combined the best assets of the British game with those of the continent.

None displayed these qualities better than Scottish star Graeme Souness, the midfield maestro who could play like a rugby front-rower or float like a butterfly depending on what was necessary.

Liverpool raised consistency and teamwork to new levels where eight-man passing moves at high speed often led to spectacular goals that were shared by most members of the team.

Significantly, few of Liverpool's games in Europe stood out because for the best part of six years they played at a consistent high level.

Perhaps their greatest achievement was winning their fourth Euro Cup in 1986 when, after a long and hard season in home, they simply refused to be intimidated by Roberto Falcao's Roma in the final in Rome and ended up winning on penalties after a tense 1-1 draw.

Liverpool's Roman conquest may come as a surprise to some but it was nothing compared to the two huge upsets that took place in 1967 and 1986.

Holders Internazionale were dominated in European football with their dreaded defensive football comprising a park defence and fast counter-attacks.

Everybody expected Celtic to be just another naive victim of the experienced Italians. But the Scottish champions mounted a non-stop bombardment that gave them a 2-1 win. Inter's aura of invincibility was shattered and it took years to recover.

The impact of that shock win in 1967 was such that it gave British clubs the impetus and the courage they needed to start having a real go. A year later Manchester United became the first British side to win the coveted cup when they beat Benfica 4-1 at Wembley.

The next biggest final shock took place in Seville where Spanish champions Barcelona, coached by current Soccer boss Terry Venables, took on modest Steaua Bucharest.

The Spaniards were overwhelming favourites. They had two fearless defenders in Miguell and Alexanco, a superb striker in German Bernd Schuster and two strikers in Steve Archibald and Franco Carrasco.

But on the night nothing went right for them and the rugged Rumanians held out for an uninspiring goalless draw and the final on penalties, where Barcelona unbelievably missed four kicks out of five. Steaua had become the first team from behind the Iron Curtain to win the European Cup.

Even Marseille caused a mini-sensation by beating mighty Milan 1-0 at their 1993 final with a goal by defender

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Even Marseille caused a mini-sensation by beating mighty Milan 1-0 at their peak in the 1993 final with a goal by defender

Basile Boli to give France its only success in the competition.

But Marseille's historic victory came at a price, which brings us to an unsavoury side of the world game. Shortly after their Milan triumph, the French club was banned from European football and demoted to the French second division after being found guilty of bribery in domestic football.

Two years later Dynamo Kiev of the Ukraine also was suspended from Europe after being found guilty of attempting to bribe a referee in a key European game, while accusations involving Belgian, Italian and Portuguese clubs are still being investigated.

Of course, such claims are not new. Back in the 60s many teams, including the famous Inter, were accused of using illegal means to secure success on the field. However, serious accusations were never proven or were claimed to have been swept under the carpet.

But by far the worst advertisement for the competition took place in Brussels on 29 May, 1985 when 39 people – mostly Italians – died as a result of rioting before the final between Juventus and Liverpool in Brussels' old Heysel stadium.

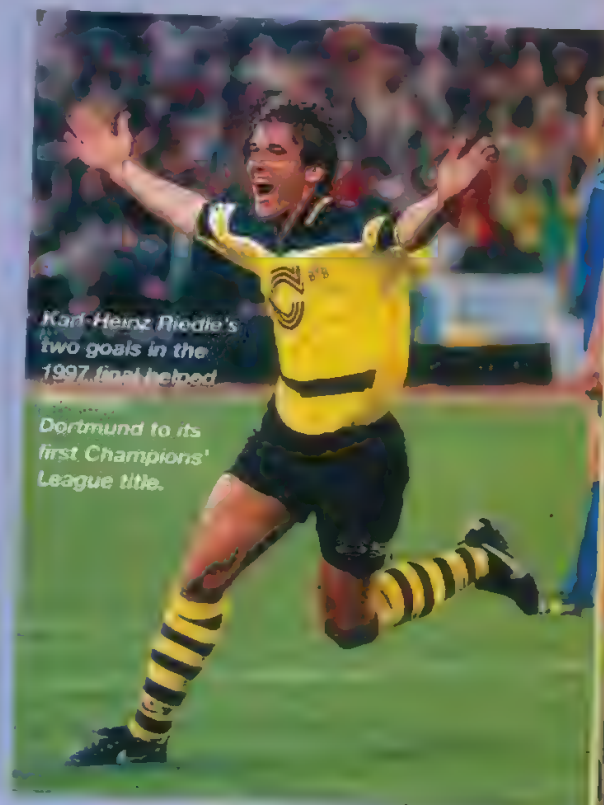
The disaster cast a sinister shadow on the game and illustrated to tragic effect just how serious the problem of crowd violence had become.

It did not matter much that some Liverpool fans were ruled to be responsible for the fracas. What mattered most was that football was no longer a mere sport and was becoming too huge a monster to handle with outdated methods.

The tragedy forced authorities to revise ticket allocation systems, increase ground security, install crowd surveillance and convert as many stadiums as possible into all-seaters.

These measures seem to be working and soccer violence has decreased spectacularly since the dark days of the 80s.

The ugly scenes that shocked an incredulous world are now a distant if painful memory. And as the competition enters a new era, we can rejoice at the marvellous recollections of such all-time

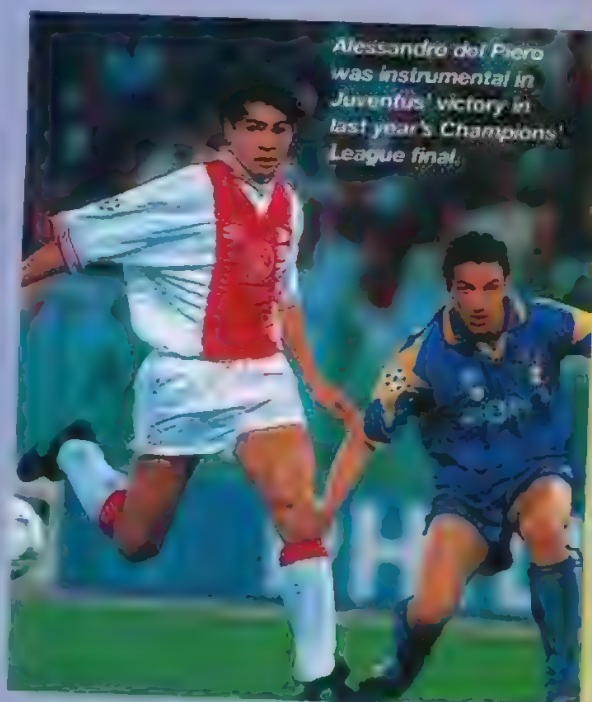


Karl-Heinz Riedle's two goals in the 1997 final helped

Dortmund to its first Champions' League title.

greats as Di Stefano, Puskas, Cruyff and Van Basten and their sublime skills.

Add to that list a host of other heroes without whose names the story of the European Cup would be incomplete. Men like Gianni Rivera, Franz Beckenbauer, Sandro Mazzola, Bobby Charlton, Eusebio, George Best, Jimmy Johnstone, Michel Platini, Kenny Dalglish and Gerd Muller, who dazzled millions of fans with their sheer class and who were chiefly responsible for making sure football remained the number one sport in the world.



Alessandro del Piero was instrumental in Juventus' victory in last year's Champions' League final.

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2002
World Cup Korea

A path thro

The Kiwis have been defeated and the fourth-placed Asian nation looms as our only obstacle to a place at France '98. KEVIN CHRISTOPHER and HARRY GEORGIADIS investigate the history of Asian football and take a look at the countries that may tackle the Socceroos in November.

The wheel has turned full circle. Australia's first World Cup finals appearance in 1974 hinged on a two-legged series against an Asian opponent and 32 years later we are faced with a similar obstacle.

The difference this time, of course, is that we do not have to beat Asia's best. As a direct consequence of the World Cup doubling in size over that period Australia will now have to play the nation which finishes fourth in the final Asian qualifying tournament later this year.

This relatively easier path to the finals has many locals rubbing their hands with optimism, particularly as Australia will field the strongest, most professional team the country has ever sent out, and it is true that Australia has an excellent chance of qualifying.

But Asian soccer has also progressed enormously over the past five years, especially outside the big three of South Korea, Japan and Saudi Arabia, and Aussie fans considering mortgaging the house and taking French lessons would be well advised to wait until December.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) is certainly the most varied, although tags such as the 'Monty Python' confederation can no longer be justified. While European, African and South American football may have defining characteristics, Asian football's diversity defies simple stereotypes.

The bare statistics can give no warning. Geographically speaking it is the largest confederation and the region accounts for nearly half the world's population.

Try this for variety:

- The immensely wealthy Gulf states in the Middle East who pour millions of petro-dollars into the development of football;

- The Indian sub-continent, where although cricket is king, football has a proud heritage;

- The Russian border, where the former Soviet states may be geographically distant but their football is deeply imprinted with the Soviet influence;

- The Far East, where Korea and Japan have the resources and technical expertise to make a huge impact on football.

That combination alone should send shudders through the rest of the world, despite having an impressive base. On the whole, the region - with one or two obvious exceptions - has yet to make a large impression in major tournaments. Even at the World Cup finals in particular, Asian teams have been, at best, respectable.

The most famous of Asian World Cup adventures was that of the North Koreans in 1966, and when Japan finished fourth in the 1968 Olympics there was genuine optimism in the region. The mood was further boosted by the election of Jozsef Havelange, with the promise of greater World Cup representation and the subsequent experience gained surely resulting in improved standards throughout the confederation.

Well, it didn't happen overnight. It is still happening. Certainly to the extent that the top level of Asian countries are now

through Asia

The bare statistics can give no greater warning. Geographically speaking it is the largest confederation and the region accounts for nearly half the world's population.

Try this for variety:

- The immensely wealthy Gulf states in the Middle East who pour millions of petro-dollars into the development of football;

- The Indian sub-continent, where although cricket is king, football has a proud heritage;

- The Russian border, where the ex-Soviet states may be geographically Asian but their football is deeply imprinted with the Soviet influence;

- The Far East, where Korea and Japan have the resources and technical expertise to make a huge impact on world football.

That combination alone should send shudders through the rest of the world, yet despite having an impressive base to build on, the region - with one or two obvious exceptions - has yet to make a large impression in major tournaments. Results at the World Cup finals in particular have been, at best, respectable.

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Well, it didn't happen overnight, but it is happening. Certainly to the extent that the top level of Asian countries are now

considered worthy opponents to the best of the best. Yep, even Brazil. If the money's right, of course...

Also, Havelange's introduction of the wildly successful under-age tournaments has lifted both the profile and standard of Asian soccer to the point where senior Asian teams are no longer overawed by the prospect of meeting the Germans and Argentinas of this world.

Having said that, the World Cup is where a nation's deeds are etched in history and by that benchmark the Asians have failed to put the runs on the board.

The region's first representatives, the Dutch East Indies, entered the 1938 qualifying tournament and suddenly found themselves in the finals when Japan withdrew. They were walloped 6-0 by Hungary. South Korea fared even worse in 1954.

Four years later Israel were the next 'Asian' team set to reach the finals via the withdrawal method but a FIFA rule change ensuring no nation could compete in the finals without having played at least one qualifier - forced them into an inter-confederal play-off. Enter Wales, exit Israel. The play-off format was a stumbling block again four years later when South Korea ran into a rampant Yugoslavia.

1965 saw Australia enter the Asian World Cup picture and with all but North Korea withdrawing, Australia was unable to truly gauge themselves against a variety of their northern neighbours. Although thumped 9-2 on aggregate, Australia could draw some comfort from the fact the Koreans went on to eliminate Italy and scare the hell out of Portugal.

Israel took the 'Asia/Oceania' place for the first of the Mexican finals but 1974 saw many Asian countries enter for the first time - ignoring the Israeli presence - and we witnessed an absorbing, multi-tiered qualification process which saw Australia win through to their first and only finals. It was the last occasion that Asia was not represented at the World Cup finals.

Since then Iran, Kuwait, South Korea,



Australia defeated South Korea earlier this year, but the Socceroos wouldn't relish a return encounter in the World Cup qualifiers.

Iraq, UAE and Saudi

Arabia have all made appearances although only the Saudis have progressed beyond the group stage.

Overall, the Asians have been upstaged in recent times by the Africans, and until an Asian nation reaches the quarter finals of the World Cup the reputation of the region's football will still be one lagging



early eighties China, Iraq, Syria, Korea and Japan have all fallen at the quarter final hurdle.

The expanded 1997 tournament in Malaysia was especially disappointing for Asia with three out of five representatives failing to progress past the group phase, although Japan kept the AFC flag flying by reaching the last eight.

Down at Under 16/17 level, Asian teams have enjoyed greater success with Saudi Arabia winning the 1989 event, while Bahrain, Qatar and Oman have finished fourth in recent times. These impressive results have failed to attract the attention of the major European clubs however. While the big clubs have

behind the rest of the world. Asia's record in the resuscitated Inter-Continental Cup is none too flash either, with Saudi Arabia and Japan combining for five losses from six matches.

The story is much the same at Olympic level although results are misleading due to the variety of player-eligibility rules. India reached the semi-finals in 1956, as did the United Arab Republic in 1964, but since Japan performed heroics in 1968 the pickings have been slim.

In the under-age categories - where there is a more level playing field - results have been a little more encouraging. South Korea and Saudi Arabia have both been impressive regulars at the World Youth Cup although Qatar are the only Asian nation to make a final, in 1981. South Korea finished fourth in 1983 but since the heady days of the

continent for decades, Asian soccer has been unable to attract the same level of admiration. There are a number of reasons for this, but there is no doubt that Australia has enjoyed far easier qualification paths to major events, resulting in some players being exposed to the scouts at two or even three under-age tournaments. The further expansion of such tournaments will surely suit the major Asian countries.

As will the continued employment of Brazilian and ex-Soviet coaches, giving their senior teams at both club and national level a nice cocktail of flair, intelligence and pragmatism. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are just two countries to have benefited from the combination, and with five ex-Soviet states joining the AFC the education will continue.

So, who is Australia likely to play?

That, of course, is the multi-million dollar question. If Australia were to play the Asian winner the task of selecting their next opponent would be considerably easier, but attempting to select who will finish fourth is a lottery.

Any of the 'big three' are capable of putting in a shocker or getting a man sent off or conceding a last minute dodgy penalty. Alternatively a minnow could cause a shock and reach the semi-finals before collapsing in a heap. So with great trepidation we'll attempt to briefly showcase each of the 10.

Qatar - Finished third (of six) in the final qualifying round-robin for 1990 World Cup (the top two went to the finals). Beaten twice by North Korea in the '94 campaign.

The only Asian nation to appear at five U16/17 World Championships (85, 87, 91, 93, 95) which may explain their recent improvement at senior level. Not expected to finish in the top four.

Saudi Arabia - Gave Jimmy Hill £25 million (\$55 million) in the 70's before deciding that Brazilian coaching methods were better suited to their physique and climate.

Luckily, most of the money was spent on infrastructure, something which would prove enormously beneficial. Won the Asian Cup despite a less than full strength team and are expected to qualify for France without having to visit Australia.

Japan - Desperately unlucky not to qualify for USA '94 when a late Iraqi equaliser allowed South Korea to slip through to the States on goal difference. As joint hosts in 2002, Japan simply must qualify for France, something FIFA will be aware of.

South Korea - Also expected to qualify direct, but since their poor showing at the Asian Cup they have undergone a rebuilding process which has produced

limited results. Romped home in the preliminaries, but will need to perform their peak in the final round. Sweep Myung Bo is still one of Asia's finest. The attack of Ko Jeong Woon and H Sun Hong is prolific. Non-qualification would no doubt lead to some serious searching. Seriously though, like Japan they must qualify. Australia has been warned.

Iran - The Iranians were Asia's undisputed superpower in the 1970s winning three successive Asian Cups (72, 76) and qualifying for the 1978 Cup. Their rise to prominence had been bankrolled by the Shah's immense revenue but the Islamic revolution and subsequent war with Iraq saw football enter a dark period.

Upon returning to mainstream competition they quickly reasserted their influence at club level with victories in major club tournaments, but a late withdrawal from the 1992 Asian Cup against Japan and three players banned for a year for attacking the referee.

The talk of the tournament for 1994 was for reasons after thumping South Korea in the last Asian Cup and the talk of a comeback after demolishing the Maldives 17-0 in June.

A genuine chance of qualifying for the 1994 World Cup by hosting Australia.

China - Spent years in the soccer wilderness due to the Taiwan problem but almost qualified for the 1982 World Cup before New Zealand scored a stunning win in Saudi Arabia to force a play-off. Were even closer to qualifying for the 1986 finals, but two goals conceded in the last five minutes of their final match prevented further anguish. They have safely negotiated one of the weaker preliminary qualifying groups for 1998 but lack the class to finish in the top three. Australia may yet suffer a Chinese burn on the way to France.

Kuwait - Another Gulf state that has benefited enormously from the patronage of the Gulf states.

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The talk of the tournament for different reasons after thumping South Korea 6-2 at the last Asian Cup and the talk of the world after demolishing the Maldives 17-0 in June.

A genuine chance of qualifying direct, or hosting Australia.

China - Spent years in the soccer wilderness due to the Taiwan problem but almost qualified for the 1982 World Cup before New Zealand scored a stunning 5-0 win in Saudi Arabia to force a play-off. Were even closer to qualifying for the 1990 finals, but two goals conceded in the last five minutes of their final match provided further anguish. They have safely negotiated one of the weaker preliminary qualifying groups for 1998 but lack the class to finish in the top three. Australia may yet suffer a Chinese burn on the way to France.

Kuwait - Another Gulf state that has benefited enormously from the patronage of

their football-mad royal family. Unfortunately, their 15 minutes of fame came via the disgraceful events in Valladolid in 1982 when it took the president of the FA to prevent a walk-off against the French. Have almost recovered from the effects of the Gulf War with promising performances at last year's Asian Cup following on from their win in the Gulf Cup.

Uzbekistan - Winning the 1994 Asian Games was just the first shock. In the two-legged play-off for a spot at the 1996 Asian Cup they trailed Tajikistan 0-4 after the first leg but qualified after extra-time in the second leg on the golden goal rule.

Missed the quarters but showed enough to suggest further competition will establish them as an Asian power. At club level, Neftchi's appearance in the semi-finals of the Asian Champions Cup suggests more shocks are in store.

Kazakhstan Had achieved nothing of consequence until their twin victories over Iraq in the current qualifying campaign. The exposure the players will receive later this year will provide opportunities to play abroad and enable them to follow the path of Uzbekistan. The domestic game remains in turmoil due to fiscal problems but the skill level was high



against Iraq and are the minnow voted 'most likely to...'

UAE - Eased through to the last ten via a weak qualifying group but will struggle against the big names on neutral territory. Shock qualifiers in 1990 and even scored against West Germany, but have little recent form to recommend a repeat despite finishing runner-up in last year's Asian Cup.

ASIA/OCEANIA AT THE WORLD CUP

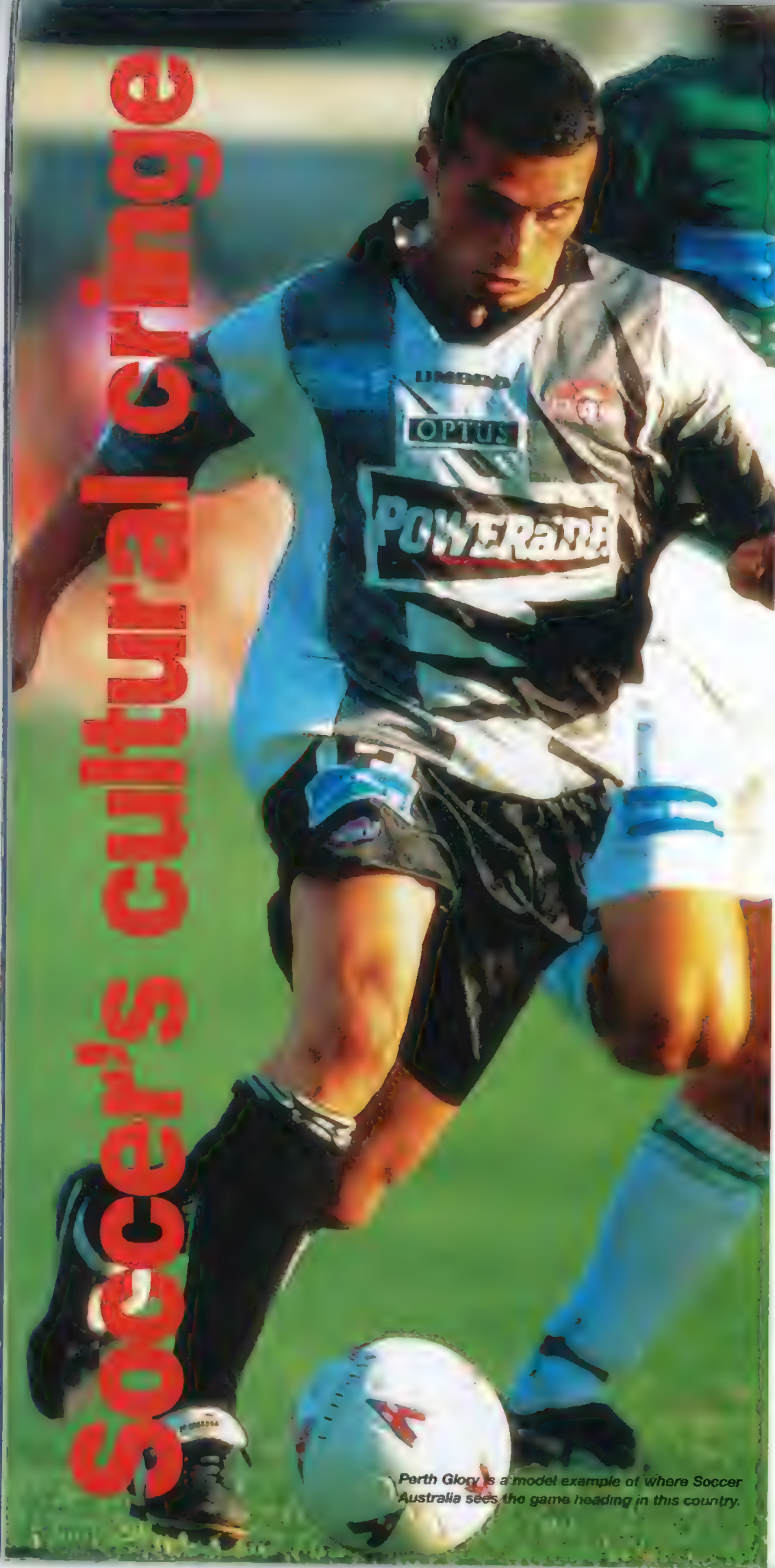
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Iran						1st rd				
New Zealand							1st rd			
Kuwait							1st rd			
UAE								1st rd		
Saudi Arabia									1st rd	2nd rd

STUDS UP

The magazine by Aussie fans,
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Soccer's cultural cringe



Perth Glory is a model example of where Soccer Australia sees the game heading in this country.

Soccer Australia chairman David Hill has spent much of his two-year reign emphasising soccer's need to "embrace the mainstream". But will the sport's growth be at the expense of generations of tradition? BERT van BEDAF examines the issues.

On the comfortable terraces of the 60,000 capacity, all-seated Australian Football Stadium, white, Anglo-Celtic families, mums, dads and their freckled offspring, mesh cosily with a growing inner city fully assimilated ethnic families, whose grandparents can still remember the ugly riot days.

Their grandchildren speak with thick Australian accents and have abandoned their souvlakis and scotch-and-cokes for meat pies and alcohol-free Foster's lager.

Magnificently integrated, they watch a game of mainstream Australian soccer, now called football, between the Sydney Jazz (the result of a merger between the former Sydney United, Marconi Fairfield and UTS Olympic, names few can still recall) and the Melbourne Thunder (an amalgamation of the former Melbourne Knights and South Melbourne Lakers (the former bad boys of soccer together with that United mob).

When the national flag is unfurled and the anthem is played, the pliant masses rise to stiff attention, the stirring words flying forth from tens of thousands of patriotic throats. There are no fights, no taunting, no foreign flags, no abuse, no pitch invasion. Gone is the ethnic tag. Be Australian. We leave in peace, as we arrived. All is well with mainstream football. At home, my son asks, "Dad, why were you singing so loudly?"

"Because Soccer Australia chairman David Hill ordered it several years ago."

The election of Hill, in April 1995, proved the starting point for a remarkable revolution in the sport. "My aim is to make soccer not only part of mainstream Australian sport but also part of mainstream Australian society," he declared, and then set about achieving it.

Clubs had already changed names under a previous administration, becoming

Strikers, Knights or Breakers. The of the Brisbane Strikers, Ian Bru the club's name change had mac user-friendly. "Brisbane United s British ethnic. Ever since we bec Strikers, the media has been kin

Under Hill's early reign ethni clubs Parramatta (Maltese), Heic (Greek), Brunswick (Italian) were Mainstream club Canberra came later Collingwood and Perth ente competition. Collingwood (a mer, between Heidelberg and the Mag Rules team) flopped within nine Perth thrived.

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soccer, no more Italian symbolist Marconi. By now Pumas pawed s Knights knobbed Glory, Breakers Strikers and Lakers lynched Zebi more "Crow-Ah-See-Ah", "Hell-A Vay", but "Go Lakers" and "Fly C More than 40,000 spectators wa grand final, claimed as a mainsti triumph.

But something had snapped i events. Just when the wheels we in the right direction three incide occurred. A group of South Melb supporters threw a rock through Adelaide City bus window, seriou injuring player Angelo Costanzo. Melbourne youths smashed shop in that suburb's main thoroughfa there was fighting on the terrace Sydney during the Sydney United South Melbourne preliminary fina Parramatta Stadium.

Strikers, Knights or Breakers. The chairman of the Brisbane Strikers, Ian Brusasco, said the club's name change had made it more user-friendly. "Brisbane United sounded too British ethnic. Ever since we became the Strikers, the media has been kinder to us."

Under Hill's early reign ethnic-based clubs Parramatta (Maltese), Heidelberg (Greek), Brunswick (Italian) were axed. Mainstream club Canberra came in. A year later Collingwood and Perth entered the competition. Collingwood (a merger between Heidelberg and the Magpies Aussie Rules team) flopped within nine months. Perth thrived.

By September 1996 logos were stripped of ethnic connotations. No more overt Greek or Croatian symbols attached to

Donning his Dirty Harry suit, Sydney columnist Jeff Wells told Croatian supporters, "Go on creeps, make my day."

soccer, no more Italian symbolism at Marconi. By now Pumas pawed Stallions, Knights knobbed Glory, Breakers battled Strikers and Lakers lynched Zebras. No more "Crow-Ah-See-Ah", "Hell-Ahs" or "Ju-Vay", but "Go Lakers" and "Fly Cosmos". More than 40,000 spectators watched the grand final, claimed as a mainstream triumph.

But something had snapped in between events. Just when the wheels were turning in the right direction three incidents occurred. A group of South Melbourne supporters threw a rock through an Adelaide City bus window, seriously injuring player Angelo Costanzo. South Melbourne youths smashed shop windows in that suburb's main thoroughfare and there was fighting on the terraces in Sydney during the Sydney United versus South Melbourne preliminary final at Parramatta Stadium.

It sparked a major round of ethnic bashing. The fighting, pitch invasion, the rampaging, the demonstrations, were quickly equated with ethnic thuggery.

Hill keenly pointed the finger. He believed, "Those demonstrations were on racist and European nationalistic grounds... in support of Croatian nationalism... of Greek nationalism. There is no place in soccer for that sort of behaviour. There is no place (for it) anywhere in Australian society in the late 20th century."

Flags were a particular problem. Croatian flags, Greeks flags, Serbian flags were symbols of foreign nationalism. Donning his Dirty Harry suit, Sydney columnist Jeff Wells told Croatian supporters, "Go on creeps, make my day." Another commentator, Grantley Bernard, cried, "Hill... should be applauded for taking the high ground on this one. Now is not the time to waver on that belief."

Hill often refers to "ownership", by which he means "identification", saying the "mainstream" does not feel "ownership" of clubs like Sydney United, Melbourne Knights, South Melbourne or Marconi. He is right, because those clubs are "owned" by Croatian, Greek or Italian communities, who founded them.

That's how migrants, unable to penetrate the Anglo-Celtic, Australian mainstream of the 1950s, gained some self-esteem, to converse and enjoy social contact in a climate of equality and fraternity.

This is not to say that "ethnic" clubs should remain insular, but they have the right to remain that way. It is up to the "mainstream" either to join those clubs and integrate, if they wish, or start up their own club and compete in the market place, so enthusiastically courted and promoted by Soccer Australia.

New clubs like Perth Glory and Carlton are formed in the Hill mould. The rise of non-aligned clubs and the passing of time may cause so-called ethnic clubs to gradually disappear, but it should occur naturally rather than arbitrarily.

Joe Brondolino, the chief commissioner

of the Victorian Soccer Federation, said, "Hill only wants mainstream clubs in the national league. But what is mainstream? Is it clubs without ethnicity or only Anglo-Celtic based clubs? Who gives him the authority to say migrants can't have their own clubs (in the national league)?"

Brondolino pointed to a FIFA rule, which prohibits racial discrimination. "FIFA's Article 2, sub-paragraph 3.1 says there shall be no discrimination against a country or an individual for reasons of race, religion or politics," he said.



Kresimir Marusic:
"People from different
countries must realise
this is Australian soccer."

Adele Horin, a social commentator, tried to define the meaning of "mainstream". She places the term within the conservative ideology Prime-Minister John Howard employs, saying "too much emphasis on the notion of mainstream risks arousing suspicions of difference. His emphasis on the mainstream does nothing to make people on the periphery feel included."

Migrants have long been on the periphery, but soccer was their bond. As



1996 champions Melbourne Knights are one of several ethnically-based clubs being challenged by the Hill manifesto.

Melbourne writer Beatrice Gallo wrote, "The language of soccer is universal. My uncle knew this as he sought out soccer when he first arrived in Australia (in the 1950s from Italy). It was the only language he could understand at the time."

It is no longer the language Soccer Australia wants to hear. It is more interested in mass marketing, mass sponsorship and mass media. It is the way ahead, for the good of the "ethnic" clubs. National League Player of the Year, Kresimir Marusic, who has joined Carlton from Sydney United, said, "People from different countries must understand this is Australian soccer".

Hill is always careful to acknowledge the contribution migrants have made to soccer. On Greek radio in Melbourne he said, "The migrant communities in Melbourne and Sydney can take all the credit for being the heart and soul of football. Their clubs have produced great footballers and that's a good thing."

But his generosity is always immediately

followed by his overriding theme, "But those Greek and Croatian clubs, however, need to make soccer more accessible to other communities. We should be inviting others as well and that they haven't done."

Hill's weapon to discredit migrant clubs, such as South Melbourne, Sydney United and Melbourne Knights, has been to assert publicly that crowd violence is ethnic-based.

There is no denying that soccer in Australia has a history of crowd disturbances, often centering on Balkan conflicts. However, by placing the brawl at Parramatta before the media as Hill did, it became stereotyped as "ethnic violence" at the exclusion of significant social conflicts that exist outside soccer, but still intrude on it. Hill's extravagant threat of expulsion, issued against the two clubs, only gave the media more reason to sensationalise the incident.

Brondolino asserts Hill was overreacting and there was a considerable amount of "ethnic bashing" going on as a result. "To say soccer violence exists because of the 'ethnic factor' is nonsense. Just because of a few people who carry a flag, it becomes an issue of ethnicity," Brondolino said.

"It is easy for people to say violence is ethnic based. But they don't say what to do about it. What are the solutions that do not involve ethnic bashing? What if we 'de-ethnicised' the sport and there's still crowd violence? The violence is not about ethnicity.

"Disturbances happen in all sports, in rugby, Australian rules, cricket. It is a question of a few louts causing the problems. Expelling clubs is totally ludicrous. We should be helping clubs and not sacking them. I want to solve the problems of crowd violence, but I don't approach it as an ethnic problem," he said.

Deakin University academic Roy Hay, also a well-known soccer writer and soccer historian, who recently wrote a paper called "A new look at soccer violence", said

"Ethnicity is not the sole reason for violence".

He quantified the violence as "60 per cent upbringing, 30 per cent ethnic heritage and 10 per cent inappropriate responses by authorities (police, security, media)". Sydney United president Ivan Simic said when fans had entered the pitch at Parramatta, "Police and security guards started tackling them and hitting them with batons."

Hay said that columnist Wells went "...through the roof. He must carry the can for the provocative remarks he was making. There are groups of young kids who play at being hooligans and get up the noses of civil society. They know it is the sort of thing that gets up people's noses."

The media has readily translated the Parramatta brawl into "ethnic violence", with such headlines as "Ethnic rivalry killing the game", done with the blessing of Soccer Australia.

Compare this with a recent brawl at a rugby Super League match between Canterbury and Penrith. Hundreds of league fans were involved in a crowd riot near the end of the game. A controversial referee decision apparently sparked the melee. The match had been publicised as a "celebration of multiculturalism". It was advertised in a dozen languages. Six previous multicultural matches had taken place without violence.

A "multicultural club", Canterbury has a strong Lebanese supporter base, since winger Hazem El Masri has Lebanese heritage. Lebanese flags were displayed at the match. One of the youths, Australian-born Hassan Omran, 15, said, "We wave flags to show we care for our country, that we like Lebanon and because of Hazam." Sounds familiar? Ethnic involvement? Violence? Flags? Foreign nationalism? Soccer would have been stoned for the riot. But not rugby.

Reports said schoolboys had boasted they had "bashed the coppers". A Canterbury club spokeswoman said, "This isn't a race problem. This is a community problem. It is the marginalised youth."

(Continued on page 60)



The team at Ansett Australia



Only one
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players
from head
to toe.

The team at Ansett Australia is a major sponsor and carrier of Soccer Australia.



ANSETT AUSTRALIA

(Continued from page 58)

Under the headline, "All agree, brawl on ethnic night not race motivated", Canterbury's chief executive Bob Hagan, said, "It is symptomatic of a community youth problem, rather than a race problem. We strenuously deny that multiculturalism (there) encouraged this trouble."

Stepan Kerkyasharian, NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission chairman, said, "What we saw was a show of ethnic pride by young Australians who have not yet been able to identify sufficiently with fellow Australians because they do not feel accepted. If people are not made to feel welcome, they may cling to their original identity through symbols like a flag."

And about the violence. "Teenagers of any background can get over-passionate about football match results or referee decisions. Any of these might seize an emotionally charged situation to express their feelings through violence. We need to look at this in a rational way and look at the social issues, and not jump on any bandwagon about racial tensions or cultural differences."

The NSW commissioner commented in a personal article under a huge banner over two pages, "Don't bash ethnic diversity," in the Daily Telegraph. It was the very paper that had run so hard against soccer with the Wells columns.

Could it have anything to do with the fact that the Murdoch-owned Telegraph has a vested interest in the Super League, that Murdoch owns Super League and soccer is a competing code?

The Murdoch crime is that the aspect of violence at the rugby was couched in a plausible scenario of youth alienation in an increasingly alienating society. It is reasonable to suggest that what impacted on rugby equally affects soccer. That soccer was not accorded similar treatment showed double standards and editorial duplicity.

But above all, David Hill should have realised that too, yet instead he elected to kick the ethnic ball into a sinister corner. In doing so he did a disservice to the sport he is supposed to promote.

The birth of the Blues

Carlton is almost ready for its historic first national soccer league match in October. Patrick Mangan takes a glance at how the Blues are shaping up for the 1997/98 season.

"It's a whole new ball game," proclaims the advance publicity for the Ericsson Cup's latest club, Carlton, and based on the evidence so far it's hard to argue.

With a working budget rumoured to be three times higher than most other clubs, the addition of the Blues to the national league is likely to raise the stakes significantly in this country's oldest national football competition.

The Carlton hierarchy is making all the right noises and with a fully professional squad and with the club pushing itself as 'Melbourne's first mainstream soccer club', it's clear that the goalposts are shifting in Victoria for the football code which has been an underachiever for so long.

The Blues have stated categorically that they want to become a major player in world football and while that may be an optimistic claim, it's heartening to see club soccer in this country beginning to think big and to make use of soccer's obvious marketing advantages as a global sport.

Of the teams already in the league, it is Perth Glory that has already thrown the cat among the marketing pigeons, belying the long held belief that soccer belongs only as a minor player in the local sports world.

Throughout the national league's 20 year existence, soccer has been relegated to the inside pages of newspaper sports sections, where readers and potential sponsors seldom venture.

But Perth's 11,500 average home crowds, and more importantly, the atmosphere created by the regular full houses they attracted to Perth Oval, have

surely placed overwhelmingly positive images of Australian soccer in the minds of anyone chancing upon highlights of their games on commercial television or SBS's many soccer shows.

The highlight of the 1996/97 season, though, was Brisbane Strikers' grand final victory, and, more specifically, how many people were drawn to Suncorp Stadium to witness the Queenslanders' historic victory. Even now it hasn't quite sunk in that over 40,000 (with thousands turned away at the gate) saw a game of soccer between two Australian clubs.

Carlton will certainly follow the marketing trends established by Perth and Brisbane and other progressive clubs in the Ericsson Cup, but ultimately the regularity with which the turnstiles click over for the Blues will depend on how well the team performs on the park. Given that Carlton is reputed to have a budget that would make the rest of the league blush, it's no surprise that some pundits are predicting a big

season for the new boys.

"In terms of offering contracts to players I don't think anyone could compete with Carlton at this stage, maybe apart from Marconi," says Strikers coach Frank Farina of the Melbourne outfit.

The Blues deny that their financial cup runneth over, but without a doubt,

the perception is that Carlton should be successful in their inaugural campaign. Says Farina: "It's going to be a difficult season for them because there will be high expectations, believe it or not. If you've got that big a budget, well, mate, you've got to perform. But under Eddie Krncevic (the coach of the Blues), I think they'll do well."

And does Farina see Carlton as a threat for Brisbane's hard-earned title?

"Definitely," he says. "I think they'll be a threat, for sure."



Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic with Terry Venables at Optus Oval.

COL

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"a whole new
ball game"

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**HAS
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KICK-OFF

The Four Diegos

Melbourne radio celebrities *The Four Diegos* take a light-hearted look at Aussie soccer.

Bad Hair Day?

Hopefully the beginning of the new Ericsson Cup season won't see a continuation of the trend evident during the 1996/97 finals series. Unfortunately the top quality football drama on offer wasn't matched by some players' choice of hair styles and facial hair designs.

Baby faced Paul Trimboll looked out of place with what was his valiant attempt at growing a beard. He looked more like Charlton Heston in 'The Ten

like they were auditioning for the part of Curly in 'The Three Stooges'. And what about the man all banana benders look up to, Frank Farina and his post-grand final "Romper Stomper" head shave? Apparently it scared the daylights out of his kids.

Remove the marital soccer chastity belt and win!

Gippsland Falcons coach, Frank Arok,

has a lot to answer for. Incredibly, for the first time in 39 years, Frankie has allowed his wife, Gordana to attend soccer matches where he is involved, and it appears the removal of the marital soccer chastity belt prompted immediate results. Gordana attended the last five games

of the national league season and Gippsland won them all. In addition, the crowds for those games were significantly higher than the 1996/97 season average for the Falcons.

Through some misguided notion that Gordana's presence brought him bad luck, has Frank, an ex-Socceroo coach, in fact

denied Australia a chance of glory? Surely her record proves that the Socceroos would have qualified for Mexico '86 and Italia '90 or better still, won the World Cup if she had attended all the Socceroo games that he coached during that time.

Oh Frank, what have you done? We could've won the cup!!!

Just Be Happy, Zoran!

After enduring a year of hell with the unmitigated disaster that was the Collingwood Warriors, our congratulations goes to Zoran Matic for being appointed the new coach of the Marconi Stallions for the 1997/98 season.

This prestigious appointment was just reward for the Aussie soccer coaching legend who deserved better than finishing his brilliant career in front of a paltry crowd of 400 people at the Collingwood Warriors' final home game, and guiding a spiritless team representing a club that had been pronounced dead months earlier.

The financial problems at the Warriors that led to the demise of the club had a soul-destroying effect on the players, but it was Matic who took it particularly hard. The usually unemotional Matic felt compelled to bare his innermost feelings to the public via the media.

"I was an idiot!" he exclaimed as he tightened the screws on the vice that he had clamped around his head.

"I feel like a vegetable!" he desperately cried from his padded cell located in the

basement of the Collingwood Warriors' offices at Victoria Park Primary School.

"Not even St. Peter can save us," he hopelessly admitted from St. Peter's cathedral, where he attended his daily church service and recited the game rosary.

With all this behind him let's hope Zoran can once again regain the title of the best coach in Australia. The Four Diegos are just relieved that his smile and bubbly personality are not a part of the game. Just be happy, Zoran!

Star Wars Technology!

The much maligned men in black have put Australian soccer on the wrong side of the move towards the use of a radio communications network for referees. Their assistants was used for the first time in the world, in the Ericsson Cup final of last season.

This move towards Star Wars technology has yet to win over the skeptics, though. One was heard to suggest the Nintendo 'Superstars of Soccer' that referee Gerry Connolly looked like he was taking orders at a McDonald's drive thru. And another said he could see the referee until Gerry, who bore an uncanny resemblance to Madonna wearing a headset, broke out into his rendition of "Like A Virgin".

The referees, however, are very positive about the introduction. They are so comfortable with it that they have felt the need to communicate in CB radio jargon.

During their trial usage of the communication between Eugene and Simon Micallef resembled scenes out of the 1970's truckin' film of "Convoy".

"Breaker Breaker Rubber Duck, we think we've got ourselves an offside over," said Brazzale.

"Ten / Four Ginger Sex beast," replied the appreciative Micallef.

Great team work, boys. Keep Truckin'!



Commandments' rather than a vital cog in the Lakers' machinery.

Aussie soccer supporters could have been forgiven for thinking that the Brisbane Strikers had gone mad when Strikers hard men, Alan Hunter and Nick Meredith shaved, polished and buffed their domes for action. They looked more

basement of the Collingwood Warriors' offices at Victoria Park Primary School.

"Not even St. Peter can save us now," he hopelessly admitted from St. Patrick's cathedral, where he attended his twice daily church service and recited his pre-game rosary.

With all this behind him let's hope that Zoran can once again regain the mantle of the best coach in Australia. The Four Diegos are just relieved that his smiling face and bubbly personality are not lost to the game. Just be happy, Zoran!

Star Wars Technology!

The much maligned men in black have put Australian soccer on the world map. A move towards the use of a radio communications network for referees and their assistants was used for the first time in the world, in the Ericsson Cup at the end of last season.

This move towards Star Wars technology has yet to win over the fans, though. One was heard to suggest, during the Nintendo 'Superstars of Soccer' series, that referee Gerry Connolly looked like "he was taking orders at a McDonald's drive thru". And another said he couldn't wait until Gerry, who bore an uncanny resemblance to Madonna wearing a radio headset, broke out into his rendition of "Like A Virgin".

The referees, however, are very positive about the introduction. In fact they are so comfortable with it that they have felt the need to communicate solely in CB radio jargon.

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"Breaker Breaker Rubber Duckie - I think we've got ourselves an offside, over," said Brazzale.

"Ten / Four Ginger Sex beast, over," replied the appreciative Micallef.

Great team work, boys. Keep on Truckin'!

The Four Diegos ask their 'Hall of Fame' guests the hard questions. Here's proof:

DWIGHT YORKE

Diegos: Being from Trinidad & Tobago and playing in the English Premier League is a little like being in the Jamaican bobsled team at the Winter Olympics. How did Dwight Yorke find himself at the Aston Villa football club?

Yorke: It is a little like the bobsled team, isn't it? Coming from a country that is known for cricket and having the opportunity to play with a top club in England is certainly something that doesn't come along very often and it's an opportunity I relish and have taken with both hands. I intend to make the most of it.

Diegos: You've actually moved from the warm weather of Trinidad & Tobago to the coldness of Britain. I have noticed you wear gloves on some occasions. Have you ever had the temptation to actually take a glove off once you've scored and do a Michael Jackson moonwalk?

Yorke: I can remember taking it off once when I scored but I didn't quite do a moonwalk. Obviously I've been brought up in the humid and hot climate of Trinidad and I've had to adapt to the weather here because it does get pretty cold.

Diegos: Mark (Bosnich) says he hangs out with you and Brian Lara a lot. Is it a little embarrassing when you hit the nightclubs with an Aussie who head bangs to AC/DC and possesses two left feet, when no doubt you and Brian can move to the music in real Trinidad & Tobago fashion?

Yorke: I'm not quite sure about that. Whilst I've been in England I think I've lost some of my rhythm.



PAUL WADE

Diegos: No doubt Wadey, one of the most common questions you would usually get is 'Who was the best player you ever played against?'. But what we'd like to know is who was the worst player you played against, particularly at international level?

Wade: Gee whiz! Um... I have some really good Israeli friends out there and knowing the political situation over there being as tense as it is, I don't think I'm willing to answer that question honestly.

GEORGE NEGUS

Diegos: Is there any truth in the rumour that your ABC show, 'Foreign Correspondent', is going to be produced in France in 1998?

Negus: I'm working on it.

Diegos: We are just wondering whether you plan to be travelling to France in the 'Rainbow Warrior', by some chance.

Negus: Well, nobody has followed that

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story up for a while, have they? It might be a good one to look at around World Cup time in June 1998, perhaps.

Diegos: George, you were in Budapest earlier this year for the Socceroos' match against Hungary. We heard you also attended Ferenc Puskas' birthday party. We actually sent him a voucher for a dinner for four at Toto's Restaurant as our personal birthday present. What did Soccer Australia give him as a present?

Negus: Well, Hilly (David Hill) got on stage and made a lovely speech and presented Puskas with an akoubra and a didgeridoo. I think he thought it was something you had to blow darts out of.

FRANK FARINA

Diegos: In preparation for this interview Frank, we went through our collection. In among the Rocky movie collection we found the video of the 1993 World Cup qualifying match between the Socceroos and the Netherlands.



"Let's check just one more time - the left foot."

The Four
STEREO 97.4 FM

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FRANK FARINA

Diegos: In preparation for this interview Frank, we went through our video collection. In among the Rocky movies we found the video of the 1993 World Cup qualifying match between the Socceroos and

Canada played in Sydney.

In the first half of that game, we saw you miss a header from close range, have a mis-kick saved by the keeper from six yards, have two certain goals saved, have a strike over the bar from eight yards etc. Thankfully, you did finally score with a spectacular overhead kick while you were concussed. Have you ever been more frustrated during a game of soccer?

Farina: Well, that could have been the reason I got a yellow card. I was about to tell you blokes how much I love you, but after saying all that I've changed my mind. But seriously, I think it was one of those days where I had my left boot on my right foot. It was a frustrating day.

That day for me was certainly one that I would like to forget, but also like to remember, if you know what I mean. In terms of chances, I actually could have scored a double hat-trick on the day, but I only ended up with one goal. Look, you 'Dorritos', the most important thing is that the Socceroos won the match.



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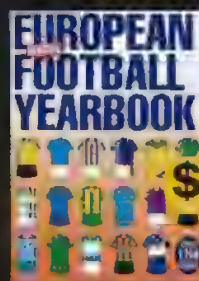
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New Socceroo coach Terry Venables is the great enigma of English football. A man surrounded by controversy, he appears to have the capacity to survive anything and everything. This book paints a picture of a man far removed from the somewhat facile image so familiar on the back pages of newspapers and on radio and television. This is a riveting portrayal which goes behind the facade and the brilliantly self-projected image of Venables.



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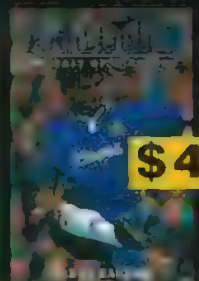


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It was the biggest transfer coup of the season when Glenn Hoddle announced the signing of Rudi Gutlit in May 1993 on a free transfer from Italian club Sampdoria. A buzz of expectancy echoed throughout the English game. Many questions were asked as to why he would want to move to Chelsea, especially when Gutlit could earn more elsewhere. These questions and many more are answered in this intimate portrait of a footballing genius.

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Premier Manager 97 is the latest product of the range from Gremlin Interactive and is set to be one of the best.

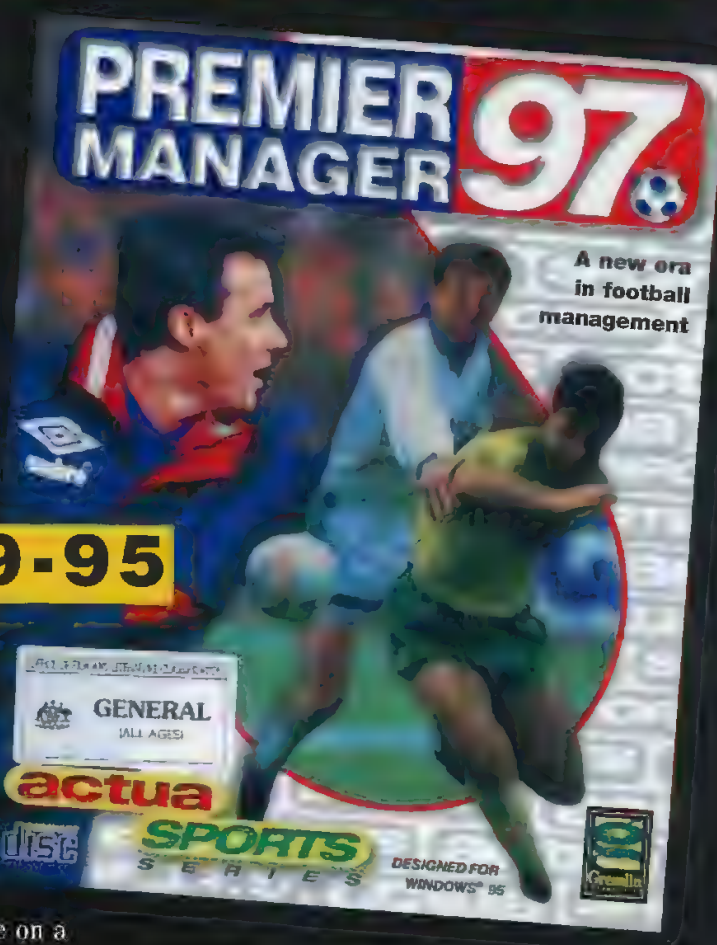
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Premier Manager 97 brings with it highly improved graphics together with some fancy updates behind the scenes that brings a better quality of play and control, ensuring it is more in-depth than any other football management

game available.

Premier Manager 97's interface is easier to use, which helps when navigating so many screens. And added to that is increased quality of in-match graphics. Add to that a better artificial intelligence (not too hard admittedly) than its predecessor, and Gremlin are on a winner with this terrific game.

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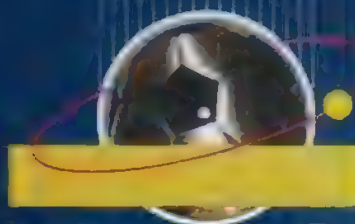
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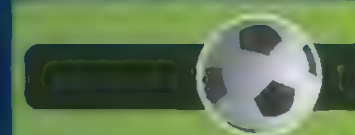


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The Internet opens the door to much soccer information that

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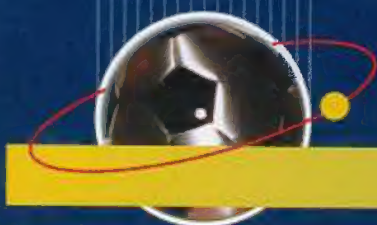
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The Rete site is produced by the Italian Football Federation and is perhaps one of the most interesting of all Internet sites in existence.

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If you cannot satisfy your soccer passion by what you buy in the newsagents, then it is time to take the plunge - and get on to the net.

The Internet opens the door to so much soccer information that it is

impossible to even contemplate ever seeing and reading it all. A simple search on the word "soccer" reveals that there are over one million pieces of information from all over the world all accessible at the touch of your keyboard.

Soccer sites from Australia to

Zambia, from the English Premier League through to local amateur competitions in Melbourne, newspaper in every language from every nation under the sun.

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Put simply, the internet is the door to immense soccer knowledge - and the key to opening it is simply a computer, modem and a telephone line.

For those of you connected or contemplating becoming a new subscriber to the World Wide Web, the following are three soccer sites guaranteed to blow your mind away.

SOCCER FEATURES

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This is perhaps the most down-to-earth soccer site you will find. Quite simply, it is an accumulation of soccer news from all over the world as it happens.

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RETE

<http://www.tin.it/rete>

The Rete site is produced in Italy but is perhaps one of the most international of all Internet sites in existence.

It provides updates on all of the world's domestic competitions including Australia. In addition, it has recorded results of all matches reaching as far back as the 1920's for many competitions.

One of the major features of this site is the NetCast, when minute-by-minute summaries are shown on screen of particular matches or competitions - predominantly European leagues. Follow one of these reports and one minute you are told Juventus is in attack and the next minute you can read that Del Piero



slammed the ball into the net. If you cannot watch the games on television or listen to the radio, this is definitely the next best thing.

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Without a doubt, this is one tremendous site not to neglect.

FIFA

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The FIFA home page presents a wealth of soccer information which what you would expect from the world's governing body.

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